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MADRAS MUSINGS

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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Phoenix-like in T'Nagar

Ground + 4, becomes 7, heads for 9 after fire

(by The Editor)

Did violations ever go away? No, they did not. But what is sad is that despite a conflagration of mammoth proportions that happened just a year back, none, ranging from builder to the authorities, has learnt a single lesson. It is left to the citizens to bear all the risks and also to protest, very much in vain.

When in 2017, the fire swept through the seven floors of a popular retailer dealing in silk, a Minister went on record to say that the building had been in gross violation of all permits even since it was built in 2000. The original sanction had been for ground plus four floors, what came up in reality was a structure of seven floors. This was constructed in full public view and yet the authorities remained oblivious of the violations. Thereafter, there ensued the usual process of going to court over the extra floors. Here again, despite orders for demolition of the additional and unapproved levels, the builder obtained a stay and carried on business merrily for a decade and more. That was until the fire came along.

There was a wave of self-righteousness in the immediate aftermath. Bureaucrats decried the way buildings had violated norms in T' Nagar and elsewhere. The Fire Department bemoaned the fact that such structures cut off all access in the event of any major disaster. It was a wonder that no life was lost in the fire, they said. The store owner said he had violated norms and so would bring down the structure (there was not much of it left standing anyway). The public, many of them regular customers of this viola-

tor, wrote long posts in social media on how such businessmen thrive.

Everyone was agreed that the retailer, if he did construct a new building, would put up a model structure in full compliance of all regulations. They little knew what a builder-bureaucrat nexus can achieve. All of a sudden, a nine-floor structure, inclusive of basement, has come up in the same place. And, what is more, work began on the construction even before the builder filed for approvals, so sure was the retailer that everything would fall

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INTACH, Chennai's 36th Heritage Club inaugurated

● Young INTACH, Chennai Chapter, inaugurated its 36th Heritage Club in schools at the Vocational Training Centre of the Anjuman Himayath-e-Islam School for girls recently.

INTACH Chennai's Sujatha Shankar and Sushila Nataraj walked into a large courtyard full of 300 young girls seated in neat rows. Most of them were there to cheer 40 of their peers who have chosen to form a Heritage Club.

This group of 40 stood out, as the girls were dressed in all-white, making a striking picture, they ranged from classes 9 to 12 – all of whom have chosen to be inducted into the Club because of their love and affinity for History. The girls were inducted formally into the VTC Heritage Club with a badge and a 'Passport', wherein they would record personal heritage knowledge and experiences.

The Club members plan to meet every Wednesday after school hours and are keen to invite resource persons who will open their areas of knowledge into different forms of heritage – both tangible and intangible.

The INTACH representatives then addressed the students and teachers and said that to create awareness, initiate heritage-related activities and bring out the importance of built, natural, and intangible heritage should be the aim of the Club.

INTACH plans to establish more heritage clubs this year. Interested schools may contact youngintachennai@gmail.com.

Will Metro offer City decongestion?

Chennai Metro is in the news again. More new underground metro rail stations are open. A single train can now take commuters to all major transport hubs in the City. From Central, you can reach the Airport in 50 minutes. About 75 per cent of Phase 1 is now functional. Average daily usership has risen to 45,000 from 27,000. To a cursory observer, these are cheerful developments. Admittedly, these are good but not all, nor enough. A closer study of the present status does not afford room to hope that Metro would complete its promise by 2025.

In Phase 1, against the target of July 2014 for two segments of the project, completion was only by June 2015 and September 2016 – late by 11 and 26 months respectively. For five other segments the delay

ranged from 17 to 29 months, except one with a 9-month delay, all against the target of December 2015. The remaining segment is already delayed by 30 months and is yet to be commissioned which is the

Phase 1 corridor to gain access to other areas in the proposed Phase 2 would not use Phase 1 facility till Phase 2 is completed.

On Phase 2, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has raised important issues to be

Continued delay of Phase 2 would cause substantial project cost over-run. The original estimate was Rs. 85,000 crore. Consequential increase in the fare might make it unaffordable. Even at full capacity, the two phases can meet only about 20 per cent of present demand and a much less proportion of the demand that would have enlarged by the time the Phase 2 is completed.

The State government must take up Phase 2 on highest priority and resolve the differences with the Centre to be able to start construction without the slightest delay. If project officials can keep their promise of six years' completion, instead of the original construction time of ten years, they will have retrieved the situation. Going by the track record on deadlines,

(Continued on page 2)

● by A Special Correspondent

Washermenpet – AG-DMS section. Estimated duration for Phase 2 was 10 years from 2015. This Phase is still in an embryonic stage. Phase 1 is 45 km of which 35 are operational. Phase 2 would cover 108 km when completed. Because 45 out of 153 km is likely to be completed shortly we cannot expect to derive proportionate benefit of 30 per cent. The truncated project will not yield proportionate benefits as commuters who must necessarily pass through

clarified by the State government. Why is ridership very low for Phase 1 compared to expectation and how does it affect the viability of Phase 2? The DPR (Detailed Project Report) submitted by the State was found unacceptable by the Centre without this and other aspects being addressed properly. This has been going on for some time now. It is disappointing that the State Government has been delaying its response to the Central Ministry.

Phoenix-like in T'Nagar

(Continued from page 1)

into place. The papers were submitted in May and the authorities, with an alacrity that they do not display when more humble citizens apply for permissions, immediately gave the go-ahead. That was in June. And immediately thereafter the builder announced that he had completed 40 per cent of the work – within a month of obtaining approval! Anyone would think that Chennai was a foreign city if this efficiency is anything to go by.

The residents of T'Nagar are up in arms. Firstly, how is it that a structure, which was permitted to have four floors in 2000 can have nine in 2018? In what way has the area become less congested or less at risk for those living nearby? Secondly,

given the manner in which the fire raged and consumed many kilolitres of water for being extinguished, how is it that approvals were so readily given? The Commissioner of the Corporation has himself lamented about the way illegal structures are proliferating in the city and the Court has come down heavily on the matter. And yet, no damages or fines were inflicted on the retailer.

Last heard, the matter has been brought to the notice of the Court, which, displaying its legendary patience and restraint, has issued a stay on the construction. But that is least likely to deter the owner or officialdom, both of whom will ensure that the building eventually will come up, as planned, and not as per permits.

Can we hope for decongestion?

(Continued from page 1)

however, it is doubtful if that is practical.

Ridership for Phase 1 has recently grown to 45,000 per day which is hardly 15-20 per cent of the rated usage capacity of 2.5 to 3.5 lakh users per day. Delhi Metro is reporting a ridership of 2.76 million per day which is indicative of full utilisation of its carrying potential. Delhi Metro has the lowest average fare, at 50 paise per km. For example, the commuters can travel from Dwarka Sector 51 to Huda City Centre, a distance of 60 km, paying a fare of Rs. 30. Chennai Metro is the costliest in the country with average fare of Rs. 4 per km compared to about Rs. 2.50 - 3.00 per km to motor cycle users. The running cost of Metro is a fixed cost as services must run irrespective of the traffic volume. This cost can be mopped up only by making the fare attractive and enlarging the traffic volume to fill the bogies. As traffic increases more bogies could be added. There seems to be no other route to improving financial viability. This approach to pricing is worth trying.

The Metro Railway (Operation & Maintenance) Act, 2002 Section 33, Metro Rail Administration (MRA) has a Fare Revision Committee (FRC) under Section 34(1) of the Act. The first phase provides an opportunity for pricing

experiments to identify a fare that facilitates high utilisation of the rolling stock for viable operation. The Act provides for a bureaucratic mechanism for fare fixation as can be seen from the composition of the FRC with a Judge and one representative each from the State and the Centre. CMRL should put up to the FRC a forceful case for a graduated pricing model. Pricing of utilities that affect the living cost of the lower strata calls for affordable pricing. No-profit-no-loss of cash should be the first aim. A set of pre-defined eligibility norms for subsidising for mass transport should be considered as a general policy for all Metros to keep living costs low for the economically weaker classes. The subsidy is recovered many times over through lower pollution, reduced congestion and wider employment opportunities. Transport security ranks with food security. Poor utilisation in response to unrealistic pricing will not be good for the Metro. It could reduce the Metro to the status of a week-end novelty for recreation.

Without the full Metro network in Phases 1 and 2, substantial reduction in congestion is not possible. Imaginative pricing and taking up the construction of Phase 2 immediately are of high priority to retrieve the situation. Delay would leave us permanently chasing a rapidly growing aggregate need.

Madras Week here again

Chief, you just do not know what you have unleashed- you, and the other people who first came up with this idea, to be precise, of Madras Week. The Man from Madras Musings was privileged to attend the curtain raiser press conference this year and came away with some fairly firm conclusions:

1. People are unable to understand that Madras Week is a free for all, open to all kinds of events, just as Chennai is a free for all, open to all kinds of activity. And so despite some of the speakers at the press conference going on and on about how there is no organising committee for Madras Week, many news reports the next day began with the lines, "The organising committee of Madras Week has announced..."

celebration of what the metropolis stands for, period. And yet, this is the time when articles, never to be seen at any other time of the year, keep getting published to the effect that the town is 2000 years plus (good for it, says MMM) and that a group of self styled historians are insisting on creating a new history by declaring that the city was founded in 1639. The funny thing is that Madras Week organisers too recognise the 2000 years plus history of the area (how can anyone deny it, for it stares everyone in the face) and have included these aspects in all celebratory events. So what is there to disagree or complain about anyway?

To MMM, it is all rather strange that what ought to be a simple and straightforward thanksgiving to a metropolis

followers have celebrated, the newspapers and media have reported on it, and so let us move on. Until the next pronouncement, that is.

Now just imagine today is February 24, 2019. You have set out to do your shopping, all filled with joy at the thought that you will soon be home with your purchases in those lovely crackling plastic bags that you could add to your collection, all of which will come in useful some day – you know to pack things or give something away or, more simply, to tie your garbage in and throw out on to the street. You are suddenly told that you will not get any more bags and you need to bring your own. MMM can quite understand how you would feel. It is like the end of civilisation as we knew it.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

2. The absence of sponsors of any kind is another mystery, comparable to that of the man in the iron mask. People are unable to understand that the organisers (oops, sorry Chief, MMM realises that there are none), are actually able to put together a set of events (sorry once again, Chief, MMM knows that nobody actually puts together things for Madras Week, it just happens) without what in Chennai are known as 'sponsors'. Apparently no event in the city is complete without these people and when the event happens, they demand their due share of 'bublicity'.

3. That no matter how much is said that this is actually a celebration of the city, past, present and future, there are bound to be some people who will say the event is commemorative of a colonial past alone. You, Chief, and others who are NOT an organising committee but who can loosely be called the founding fathers (with a mother or two also thrown in) have time and again asked these people to look at the list of events that have been put up in earlier years to judge for themselves whether the programmes are exclusively a celebration of our colonial past, but all of that has fallen on deaf ears. MMM guesses that it is much easier for such protestors to continue saying what they are saying. They do get their due share of 'bublicity' and perhaps that is what they are after.

4. Also, for some reason, the idea seems to persist that we are celebrating the founding of our city in 1639. That may have been the way Madras Week started several years ago, but it has long since given up on that claim. It has moved on to becoming a

that has given its residents so much has become a matter of debate.

Out with plastics

Our State Government (and yes, we do have a functioning entity), has made a pronouncement. Effective February 24th, (and that is one of two dates that our Government sets special store by, the other being December 5th), next year, our State, it has said, will become plastic-free.

This is an era of pronouncements of this kind and so *The Man from Madras Musings* will take it with a lump of salt. After all, this is the same State Government that had earlier said that open defecation will be a thing of the past by some date that too is now long past. The last elected Mayor we had (oh, how long ago that was), had once declared that all toilets in hotels and wedding halls will be thrown open to the public so that they would not have to undergo the embarrassment of relieving themselves in the open. Not that the general public appears to consider this an embarrassment – MMM has seen many men relieving themselves in full public view, just a few steps away from a well-maintained pay and use toilet. Why pay for it when it can be done for free, is the general attitude.

It is with those same sage announcements, all made with the best intentions but with no hope of ever being implemented that MMM would like to file the latest on plastics. There is absolutely no plan whatsoever on how to go about it. The leader has spoken, the

How will our political parties conduct public meetings without plastic bottles of water for our beloved leaders to slake their thirst even as they speak? Imagine a celebratory meeting for the banning of plastics and the leader on the dais reaches out to unscrew a bottle cap only to be met with a man carrying an earthenware pot and a steel glass. It somehow does not have the same effect does it?

Tailpiece

The Man from Madras Musings could not help chuckling though he did realise it was a serious matter. He alludes to the blatant manner in which a building belonging to a silk retailer has been put up in gross violation of all permits, just a short while after the earlier structure there, owned by the same entity and which contravened all safety norms, went up in flames and had to be demolished. But the headline for the story that appeared in one of the city newspapers brought up (sorry, pun wholly unintended) all kinds of thoughts. For the sake of clarity, MMM features it below.

—MMM

'Speedy' erection of Chennai Silks' building stayed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

CAN construction of 40 per cent of a high-rise building be completed within 20 days from the date of approval by the authorities?

Baffled over this, a division bench of the High Court has granted injunction restraining the Chennai Silks from going ahead with the construction...

OUR READERS WRITE

Punctuality

Reader S.S. Rajagopalan's letter (MM, July 1st) about H.C. Buck's observations on punctuality reminds me of the late Eric L. Stracey, I.P.

I was in the Central Police Training College, Mt. Abu (now Police Academy in Hyderabad) in 1960-61. Stracey was the Deputy Commandant. The rule for the I.P.S. probationers was that they should be in the classroom exactly five minutes before a class started. Stracey's room was adjoining the classroom and you could hear the click of the door, opening exactly on

time for commencement of his lecture.

One day, it so happened he saw an IPS probationer sitting in the class ten minutes in advance and Stracey asked him why was he early. He replied that he was being careful not to be late. Stracey responded by saying that by being early he showed his lack of confidence in himself and should be there only five minutes in advance!

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“There is a perception that Amma Naana is an expensive shop. It is not. We sell all the Indian brands at the MRP rates mentioned on the packaging. Imported items are priced depending on the costs incurred in procuring them,” says Senthil Raj, the CEO of Amma Naana, the stand alone department store, well-known for stocking imported brands of a variety of products. The store

is located at the intersection of Chamiers and Boat Club Roads facing the Crowne Plaza Hotel (the old Park Sheraton).

Amma Naana was started by Raja Mani, an aunt of Senthil in 1971, 11 years before Senthil was born. Her husband V.R. Govindaswamy was also a partner in the venture. It was a milk depot occupying only 500 sq.ft. Sale of vegetables and grocery were added later by acquiring

Thank you, Donors

We today, publish donations received with thanks for the period upto July 10th.

– The Editor

Rs. 100: D. Sugavanam; G.K. Vasan; John J. Moses, Ashok Kumar, Lakshmi Narayanan

Rs. 150: T.M. Raghunathan; S. Prakash; C.V. Viswanathan

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Rs. 400: Dr. V.V. Jayaram, V.S. Rajappan; K.S. Srinivasan; R. Ganapathy; Dr. N.V. Pundarikantan; *Industrial Economist*, A.N. Sachithanathan; Dr. Patrick Yesudian; T.R. Gopalan; G. Dasarathy; N. Anantharam; Capt. Shankar; D.J.B. Immanuel; Lakshmi Jayaraman

Rs. 401: Anand M. Gadre

Rs. 500: Akila, Krishnaswamy Associates; Gp. Capt. K.S.V. Sharma (Rtd); Sarada Narendranath; C.S. Rodrigo

Rs. 600: N.S. Parthasarathy

Rs. 1000: V. Murugaappan

Rs. 1900: S. Satya Bhama

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Rs. 2900: Hugh and Colleen Gantzer

Rs. 5000: P.R. Sundaravadivelu

Decoration Nun remembered

Sister Isabel Mary Diaz closed her eyes on June 20 in a George Town convent, her home for decades.

A Goan, Sr. Isabel earned a name doing stuff, she was great at creating decorations for weddings and church services, making cookies and jams, designing table cloths and clothes for kids. And she did this even at 89.

From the convent of the Presentation Sisters, adjoining St. Columban's School on Mclean Street, her nook was alive from 7 to 8. And she tugged at Peter to pay Paul.

For, Sr. Isabel had skilled lots and lots of poor women of this north Chennai neighbourhood to help them make a living. “She was a creative soul who created jobs for the poor,” a nun said in her eulogy.

Paying her a tribute that Sr. Isabel would have acknowledged, the nuns had decorated the altar with lots of freshly-cut flowers. And there in front, she lay in a coffin, at peace as the Presentation nuns from different convents in this city laid wreaths at the farewell.

Gracie (the nun's original name) was a teacher in Goa who loved good food and wine, good clothes and good music and dance. The night before she was to leave for a convent to join the congregation, she danced through the night and then said bye, her cousin said in her tribute.

She returned to her favourite Goan home often and at her workplace in Madras, made rose cookies and jams and wine. These became a rage in north Madras.

A couple of years ago, when I was at the Mclean Street convent, researching on the Presentation nuns in Madras, I was introduced to Sr. Isabel. At 87, though restrained to a chair she got talking. And had a request. “I'm looking for Mahadevan..that Hot Breads man...” She was seeking him to help her women learn baking skills.

Her story, her life stayed with me. A nun for six decades who had fun, was hugely creative (at one time, hotels would trip to sign her up for decorating their halls) and one who used her talent to move the less privileged.

Her last resting place was at St. Roque's Cemetery in Royapuram where a zone is carved for the Presentation nuns – buried here are the pioneer missionaries from Ireland who landed in Madras in the late 19th Century.

As the cemetery staff lowered the coffin, shoved in the mud and sealed the grave, many women began to weep, loudly. They were the ones Sr. Isabel had made.

Did the city pay a tribute to the Decoration Nun? No.

I wonder why obituaries are only reserved for the high and mighty, the awarded and the goons. Our media revels in them. But for people who make this city, unless ribbed from outside, the print and the channels have no space for the likes of Sr. Isabel.

In our small ways, may we pay Tributes. Always.

– Vincent D'Souza

Growing from a milk depot to a department store

additional shopping space. To cater to the growing demand for imported items by the elite residents of the neighbourhood, the shop also started stocking them, sourced from outlets that were already selling these items. As the business grew, the family started “Amma Wines”, which not only sold IMFL but also stocked popular foreign brands of liquor, procured from official sources.. This section was closed when the Government of Tamil Nadu decided to take over the sale of liquor under the TASMALC umbrella. Today, Amma Naana is a three-storied department store occupying 8500 sq.ft of space with limited parking facility.

It was in 2004, that Senthil was invited by his aunt to join the family business. He had just completed his B.Tech from a college in Coimbatore. Full of ideas Senthil took to the business like the proverbial ‘duck to water’. In due course, he married his aunt's daughter Sakthi Devi who is also a partner in Amma Naana. This was also the time when new, national and international brands of department stores were entering the Chennai market. Besides, the city also witnessed the influx of expats from different countries employed by several automobile companies in and around Chennai, who were demanding the popular brands of food ingredients and

other products from their countries. This opened up a window of opportunity for the shop. Senthil went around the world identifying original sources for foreign brands in Singapore, U.K. and U.S.A.

“Even if we don't have a particular item, if a loyal customer wants it, we will try and specially import it to satisfy the customer. Whenever any new

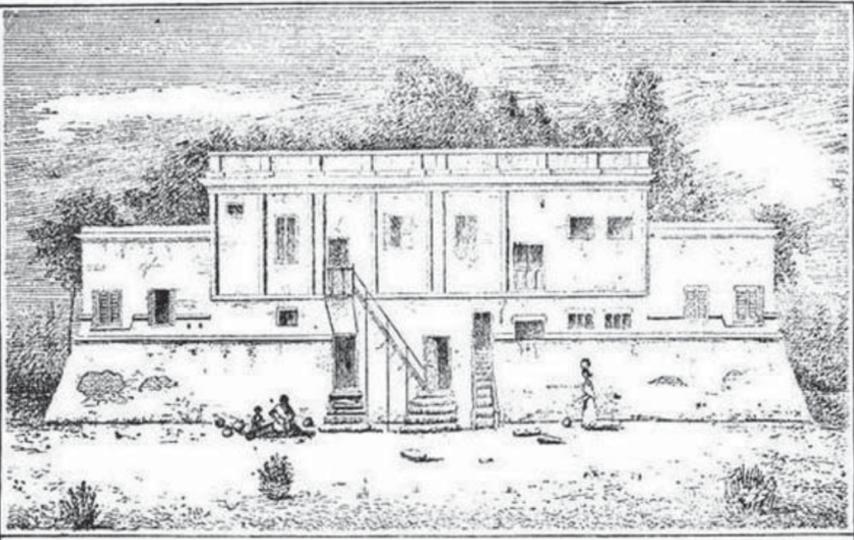
● by
R.V. Rajan
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brand is introduced in foreign countries, we will ensure its availability in Amma Naana, simultaneously. Some of the popular imported brands available include Country Kitchen, Hershey's, Diana of London, Ceylon Tea, Thousand Islands and Starbucks Coffee. Popular product categories are imported Sauces, Jams, Noodles, Butter etc. This kind of personalised customer service has enabled us to build a core of loyal customers” says Senthil. He continues, “On an average 1,500 Indian customers and 100 expats visit the shop every day. Home delivery service is offered to customers who place orders for Rs. 1,000 and above. While 80 per cent of the sales come from customers visiting the shop personally, home delivery

accounts for 20 per cent. The shop has not got on to online sales because of the prohibitive cost of acquiring and implementing the software required for such an effort. Besides, Indian customers still prefer the ‘touch & feel’ shopping experience when it comes to the purchase of grocery and vegetables.” So, the growing phenomenon of online shopping for all kinds of products does not worry Senthil at the moment.

Amma Naana's growth has come purely through word of mouth advertising by loyal customers. Senthil adds, “We keep in close touch with all consulates in Chennai. Every time a Consul General is transferred, we ensure that the incoming Consul General is informed about Amma Naana.” In fact the Korean Government has recognised Amma Naana as one of the best shops for getting Korean speciality items in Chennai.

There are plans to open one more shop on the OMR. It will be owned and managed by the management of Amma Naana. “We don't believe in the franchisee route but are open to investors who are interested in the project,” says Senthil. I am sure that the young and dynamic CEO of Amma Naana, with his ‘hands on’ style of management will make the new venture also a big success.



Remains of the Egmores Fort. The building is in the Male Asylum Road, and is now the residence of some railway employees. Its upper part has been built upon a battlemented wall, and doors have been let into the wall. The outlines of the original wall and some of the battlements can be easily traced. — from Glynn Barlow's Story of Madras.

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

— SRIRAM V

Further details emerge in the 1790s. From a minute of Major Maule dating to 1793, we know that the Redoubt had a draw-bridge that was replaced that year.

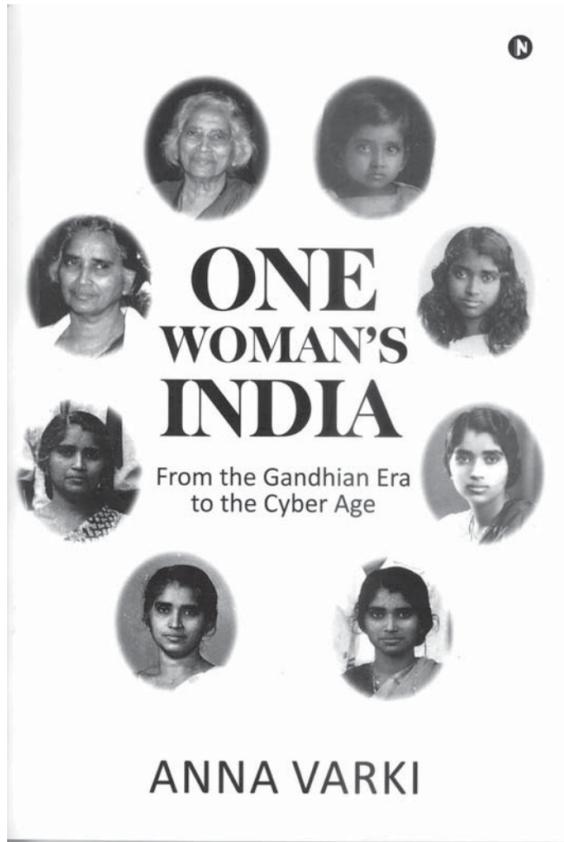
By 1799, there was no further need for a Redoubt in Egmores. The building was handed over to the Madras Male Asylum. Glynn Barlow, in his *Story of Madras*, dating to 1921, records some of the changes that the Asylum made to the Redoubt — an upper storey comprising a row of windowed chambers that sat rather oddly on the buttressed and battlemented wall, windowless and grim. To him, the composite whole was a reminder of old-time war and latter day peace. It was from here that the Asylum Press Almanac was brought out for years before the Asylum moved to Poonamallee High Road and the press to Mount Road in 1900.

That year, the Directors of the Asylum sold the Redoubt to the South Indian Railway Company which was making Egmores its headquarters in Madras. The old Redoubt underwent many changes and became the quarters of railway employees, additional

storeys being built to accommodate larger numbers. Writing in 1913, Col. Love in his *Vestiges of Old Madras*, describes what then survived of the Redoubt — “the external face wall along the western side, and about half that on the northern side, were utilised in the construction of buildings which still survive. The face wall was 6 feet high to the cordon and 3 ½ feet above, and the rampart, including both external and internal walls, was 12 feet thick. Twelve embrasures was visible in the portions preserved.”

All of these vanished when, with the nationalisation of the railways in 1951, fresh work began in the area. The Redoubt was pulled down. Today, a narrow pathway to the rear of Egmores station leads to the railway colony there. Much changed even in the last sixty years, it holds within it the original location of the Redoubt. But of the fort itself, there is not a trace.

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, hailed as a significant development in India's freedom struggle, saw Redoubt Road being renamed as Gandhi-Irwin Road and with that the Redoubt passed, even in name, from collective memory.



To the many readers who have known Anna Varki as a sparkling contributor to *Madras Musings* and other Chennai-based publications, the fact that she has put together the experiences of a lifetime into a book* will be a source of great joy.

The eight oval medallions that encircle the title on the cover show the author at different stages of her life. There is the little girl looking at the world with great big eyes followed by the same forthright gaze as she progresses through each turning point of her journey. In the last one there is a smiling portrait of the author as she approaches the grand old age of 97. This portrays Anna Varki, her face still bright, a halo of silver hair circling her head smiling into the camera.

That smile is as significant as the rolled-up umbrella that all good Keralites carry with them come rain or shine. It's with the same senses of boundless adventure just waiting beyond the front door that Varki steps into the world. It's not always been an easy life for the author but it is one that has been defined by the memories of the extraordinary era in which she was born. She calls it the 'Gandhian Era' in her subtitle. The men and women who formed a part of her growing years, even at a slight remove, were touched with a sense of destiny that the world would soon be made anew. That hope, the idealism, the joy of being involved in a quest far greater than the individual self, are what makes Varki's reminiscences

...where it is never too old to learn

special. No matter what she encounters on the way, the ups and downs along which she chugs as the wife of a railways official, Anna Varki recollects each episode with an anecdote and a smile.

She begins with her birth in Kolkata, or Calcutta as it was then known. Her father had been hoping to receive the news of a son as his second child when he was informed with the words “It's a koki!” As Varki goes on to tell us *koki* in Bengali means a girl and *koka* boy. So, my father decided to call me ‘Kuki’, which soon acquired another spelling, *Cookie*. He also brought her up to be a boy, she tells us, until her younger brother Jaiboy was born.

The name *Cookie* stuck. This was how she was known to her close friends at Queen Mary's College, Madras, as it was famously known. (We shall use both her names in the review depending on the context.)

Amongst her many friends was my mother and an elite circle of Queen Marians. As she describes it in one of the chapters many years later, when they met again, now in their 80s and 90s, in the City where some of them had retired, *Cookie* would rally them around at special events such as birthdays and the celebration perhaps of a grandchild's wedding with a rousing singing of the Queen

Mary's anthem- “Queen Marians never die! They only fade away!” On another occasion she organised her club of Over 80s, to meet the man who stitched their blouses at college.

As she describes it, “For Queen Marians, their favorite tailor was the humble smiling Naidu, who stitched blouses to perfection from puffed- to leg-of-mutton-sleeves. Started as a one-man outfit in one room, Naidu Hall is presently a flourishing business of ready-made garments run by his grand-children, while still maintaining the quality that was Naidu's hallmark!” The exclamation says it all. As everyone this generation might recall, Naidu Hall has been famous for its marketing of ladies' undergarments or bridal inner wear. Some of us close family members could not stop debating how the Queen Marians would return from their Naidu Hall tea-party flaunting the best of under-wired and lace trimmed cups in Double X sizes. As it happened, we need not have doubled up with anxiety. They returned with tales of a sumptuous tea of cakes and savories that the current owners had laid out for them — still humble, still gracious!

those days, the Cochin express went straight through to Cochin and those of us who were bound for Kottayam had to get off at Alwaye and take a bus to Kottayam. *Cookie* was in the same bus, as she had to go from Kottayam to Chengannur, her family home. Although we were both Syrian Christians, I was never close to her since she was senior to me and moved around with her post-graduate friends in the hostel. As the bus negotiated

● by
Geetha Doctor

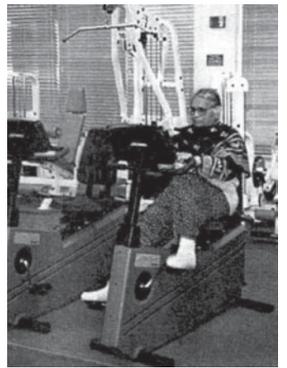
the hilly tracts, I dozed off in the bus and awoke to find my handbag missing. Besides the personal effects, it contained all my money and I was frantic. I shall never forget how *Cookie* consoled me and lent me the money to reach home. It was only a matter of 10 rupees but to me it was more of a free fall of 100 rupees.” Many decades later Varki was to teach English at the Cultural Academy.

If this is beginning to sound personal it's for a reason. Her father, the famous Pothan

democracy while working under B.N. Rao as Under Secretary, Constituent Assembly, Secretariat. As recorded by Ornith Shani in a recent book entitled *How India Became Democratic* what made Padmanabhan's contribution important was “his ability to identify with the ‘weak’.” It was he who first noted on the question of the registration of the refugees that they ‘are always on the move, and, therefore no residential qualification can be prescribed for them if they are to be given the right to vote in the next elections.’” The zeal to create a nation that would be a template for equality to all its citizens was what drove different individuals in a common pursuit that inspired and empowered even young girls like *Cookie* into a desire for serving the nation. This is what makes her title important. It underlines the passion with which young Indians, no matter what their sex, ethnicity or religion identified themselves with the adventure of not just building a nation but owning it. “This country is mine!” they might have said, echoing a famous French ruler. “L'Etat c'est Moi”.

Joseph, an editor for all seasons and several newspapers, lived in the same tumultuous period in Delhi, before and after Independence, as my parents did. *Cookie* recollects for instance that her father would greet my Dad every morning as he walked past Rowse Avenue where my young parents lived with a “Good Morning, Padmanabhan!”

My father was in those days occupied with the herculean efforts in creating what we would now call a data base for the voters who would eventually form the blueprint for Indian



On the exercise machine.

tarians, giving them donkey ears and thick lips. But he also captured the patrician style of Pandit Nehru, always on the run, elegantly dressed in his trademark *shervani* and tight Jodhpur *pajama*, with the red rose in his front buttonhole.

There are legions of stories about Pothan Joseph himself. One of his mentors nicknamed him “Potent Joe”. When he joined Jinnah as the editor of the *Dawn* newspaper that was started in Delhi, he is supposed to have quipped when his owner told him that he was often to be found in a “bibulous” state, nor ideal for an Editor. “Alas, I am



Learning to use the computer in her eighties.

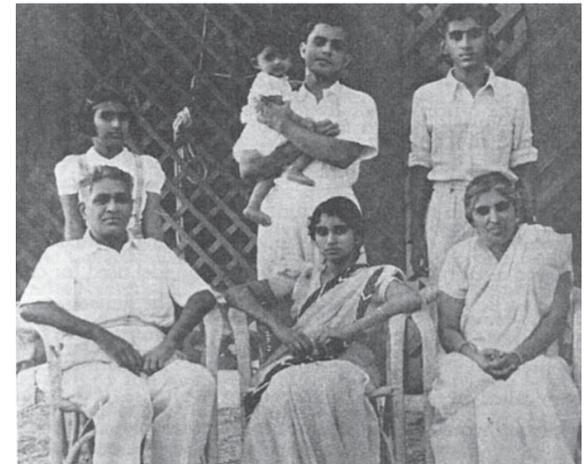
Pothan Joseph (1892-1972) was not just a maverick editor and columnist who wrote a daily political column for five decades under the heading, “Over a Cup of Tea”, he was a fearless advocate of truth in the Gandhian mode. His editorial motto used to be “Courage, vigilance and fidelity”. His ability to quote extensively from the Bible and the classics, Dickens being a particular favorite, contributed to his legend. Amongst the original spirits that he nurtured in his time was none other than Shankar, the cartoonist of *Shankar's Weekly* fame. Of him it was said the Pandit Nehru told him, “Don't spare me, Shankar!” He was fearless in his ability to caricature the pomposity of those early politicians and parliamen-

not fortunate to have been born with a Gin to my name!” The more famous riposte is the one about how his constant need to move from paper to paper and place to place led someone to say: “A rolling stone never gathers moss.” To which Pothan Joseph asked, “But does a stone need moss?”

Part of the charm of listening to *Cookie's* recollections is her ability to capture the essence of the people and events that she describes in a language that is always simple but elegant. In the early part, for instance, she might

**One Woman's India - From the Gandhian Era to the Cyber Age.* Anna Varki, Notion Press.

(Continued on page 6)



Seated: Anna Varki's father Pothan Joseph, Anna Varki and her mother Anna Joseph. Standing: Her sister Sarasu, her husband Mathew (Babpu) and her brother Jaiboy.

Eardley Norton – lawyer outstanding

In 1879, twenty-seven year old Eardley Norton loathed the prospect of having to leave England for Madras. Having completed his school and college education and worked for a brief period as a journalist, he had made an unsuccessful attempt to gain a foothold at the English Bar. Emigration became inevitable and he felt like an exile, forced by the compulsion of circumstances to eke out a living in the sweltering climate of a faraway and near alien place. But, when he sailed Madras-bound aboard the *Navarino* in 1879, little could he have known that many great experiences awaited him in the distant land he did not want to go to.

Born in Madras on February 19, 1852 as the eldest of the eight children of the great – now all but forgotten – John Bruce Norton, once Advocate-General of Madras and a renowned public figure, Eardley John Norton lived in Madras until the age of ten. In 1862, he and Robert Bruce, the first of his brothers, were sent to Brussels to start their school careers. Then, having undergone school life for a brief period at Esher, Eardley and Robert went to Rugby, one of the famous Public Schools in England. The four years spent there gave him some of the happiest memories to cherish. Then he went to Merton College, Oxford, where his experiences were no less wonderful and memorable. Having graduated as a Bachelor of Arts, he worked for a while as a journalist in London. He was later called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. Then for a brief period he practised in the Oxford circuit and was his father's Junior in London in a few cases before the Privy Council.

When his career at the English Bar failed to take off, his father urged him to go to Madras where he (John Bruce Norton) was once Advocate-General and where his name might help the young Norton to get speedy work. This also coincided with the time when Eardley got married and became the father of a son. So, in the middle of 1879, with a heavy heart, he said goodbye to near and dear ones and what was to him home and left for Madras. After an uneventful voyage aboard the *Navarino*, he arrived in Madras in July 1879.

He enrolled at the Madras Bar and, being the latest entrant, was appointed Secretary of what in later times came to be known as the 'Madras Bar Association'. In less than a year, he was made Deputy Coroner of Madras, an unpaid appointment, by Dr. Stanbrough, the then Coroner. When Stanbrough went on leave, Norton acted as Coroner and eventually was confirmed in that post, the only official position he held in his life and in which his tenure lasted for eight years until 1889, when the office was abolished. Thus, Eardley Norton was the last to hold the Coronership in Madras.

During the period of his Coronership, in 1886, the first year of Lord Connemara's Governorship, a terrible conflagration, later termed the 'Park Fire

Tragedy' happened in the People's Park near the Central Railway Station. Several people died on the spot and later at the hospital. Norton presided as Coroner over the enquiry into the cause of the tragedy. The redoubtable Rev. Dr. Miller of the Christian College had suggested that the fire was the result of a pre-concerted scheme. At the end of the enquiry, it was held that the fire was the result of an accident and not incendiarism.

During the years when Norton was Coroner – the Coronership was a part-time employment – he was also a rising barrister in Madras. In 1886, the Garstin Dacoity Case before the Madras High Court created a profound sensation. Norton appeared for the defence and succeeded in the acquittal of the Bodinayakanur Zamindar, who was charged with committing dacoity on Garstin, a Senior Member of the Board of Revenue. Shortly after the conclusion of the trial, Sullivan, a Senior Member of Council and Member of the Civil Service, filed a case against Norton in the Madras High Court for statements of a defamatory nature made by him against Sullivan both before and during the Garstin Dacoity trial. This case put Norton through a great ordeal. Nobody competent enough to hold his brief came to his help and he was compelled to defend himself. If he lost this case, his career at the Bar would come to an abrupt end, for he would be suspended from practice. But he won and

the astounding success in *Sullivan v. Norton* catapulted him into stardom at the Madras Bar. After that, there was no looking back. He emerged as practically the leader of the Bar and began to make a fortune. They began to call him the "Lion of the Madras Bar."

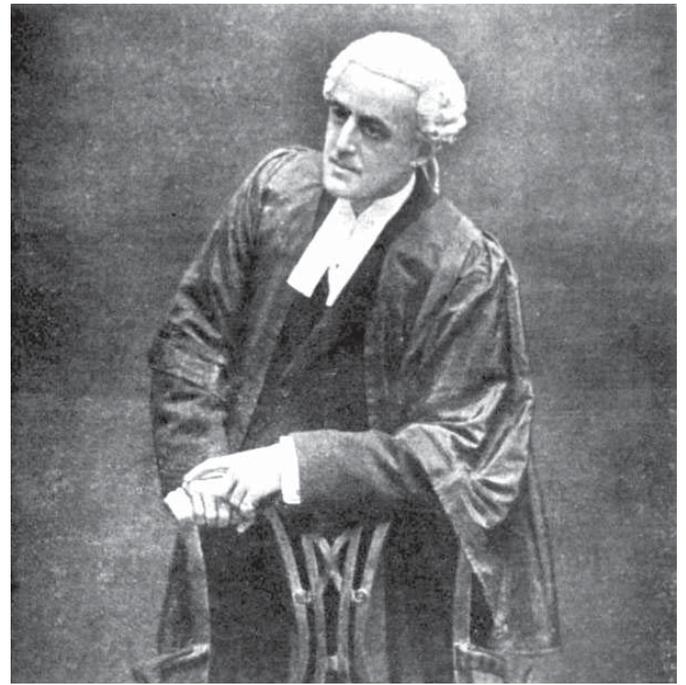
During the years when he was the Coroner and a rising barrister in Madras, the Indian National Congress was started. Norton had inherited a sympathetic outlook towards Indians – 'natives' they were often called in those days – and their political rights from his father. It was but natural that he was attracted to the Congress. He first joined the movement at the Madras Congress of 1887. In his story, the 1887 Madras Congress is memorable for two reasons. Somebody had called him

● by
Suresh Balakrishnan*

a 'veiled secessionist' for associating himself with the Congress movement. While speaking on the second day of the 1887 Congress, he gave a strong rebuttal to the charge, and this passage from his speech has since remained one of the most eloquent and powerful utterances decrying the misuse of the charge of sedition:

"I was told yesterday, by one for whose character and educated qualities I cherish a great esteem, that in joining myself with the labourers in this Congress, I have earned for myself the new title of a "veiled secessionist." (Laughter) If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong; if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs; if it be sedition to resist class-tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever advancing reform – (cheers) – if this be sedition, I am right glad to be called a 'secessionist', (cheers), and doubly, ay, trebly glad, when I look around me to-day, to know and feel I am ranked as one among such a magnificent array of "secessionist". (Loud cheers)

Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that no account of the 1887 Madras Congress will be complete without mentioning the few garden parties that took place. Norton took



Eardley Norton.

the lead by hosting an exquisite party to the delegates of the Madras Congress and other guests at *Dunmore House*, his residence in Madras. The lambent moon had begun to shed a silvery beam on Madras on December 29, 1887 when the guests arrived at *Dunmore House*. Oil lamps on poles illuminated the roadways and pathways leading up to the venue. Norton had arranged a 'Kolattum' (stick-dance) by nautch dancers, which "stern ascetics from Bengal" and other guests watched spellbound, while some others found literary repast in his vast library.

(To be concluded)

NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN

(Continued from page 5)

summon an image of Captain Lakshmi, both bold and beautiful, who joined the INA. In the latter part of the book there is yet another short sketch of that everyday creature – the humble crow. In Cookie's eyes, the crow and the raven take wing and emerge from the mists of Buddhist legend and Californian tourist spots like the Santa Catalina Island as sentinels. Or as she signs off, "It's a pity that the crow does not capture the attention of avid bird watchers who prefer to sight and watch exotic and prettier species."

If the first half of the essays can be described as easy to follow lessons for the younger generation who might think of the Independence movement as a series of events dominated by high minded words and long dead leaders; the second half is a manual for seniors. It not only describes how Cookie re-invented herself by learning and mistress her computer skills,

* About the author: Suresh Balakrishnan, an advocate, is the author of *Eardley Norton: A Biography* (2018) in two volumes. His earlier books include *Famous Judges and Lawyers of Madras* (2012). He has edited the *Lives of Chief Justices of Madras* (2013), containing selected writings of V.N. Srinivasa Rao, an eminent legal historian.

He can be contacted at catch.suresh@yahoo.com
Website: oldmadraspress.com

Copies of the book are available at: C. Sitaraman & Co., Royapettah.

it provides simple advice for those having to cope with old age. It's not as though she has not suffered broken bones, or the challenge of living on her own with increasing health problems. Through it all, her instinct is to share and teach others. She advises older people to exercise regularly, visit a beauty parlour to maintain one's feet, dispel the unsightly appearance of unwanted hairs sprouting on the once smooth womanly chins; to give 'space' to one's children, grand-children AND great-grand-children, all of which advice she dispenses with brevity and wit.

Finally, however at 97 and filled with the joy of a life well lived Anna Varkie's spirit like that of Ulysses is still ready to sail in the search of new adventures. Or in the words of the poet (Tennyson):

*One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but
strong in will*

*To strive, to seek, to find, and
not to yield. (Ulysses)*

● Our quiz master V.V. Ramanan is on holiday. His column will resume on his return.



Madras Week '18

Till August 10th, 2018

July 28

- **Games:** Celebrate Chennai. Celebrate its Games conducted by Kreedaa. Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.

August 4

- **Walk:** Explore Poonamallee.

- **Book Release:** *George Town Bicycle Trails Chennai & Penang*. For details: Cycling Yogis / Ramanujar Moulana Ph :9884023123

- **Exhibition:** *Vintage Bicycle Exhibition*. One of its kind Vintage Bicycle Exhibition, on display Rudge, Hercules, Phillips, Raleigh Chopper, World War period Paratrooper Bicycle, Robinhood and accessories including Old Oil Lamps, Brooks saddle and much more

- * Dr. V.R. Devika speaks on *Social and Cultural Milieu*. Organised by Observer Research Foundation (ORF) (Chennai Chapter). The theme for this year's Madras Week Celebration is 'Recalibrating Chennai for Gen-2K'.

- **Talk:** *Wonder Women of Madras* by Nivedita Louis Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.

- Choir Singing by Madras Youth Choir. Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.

- **Walk:** *Experiencing the community dwellings of Triplicane*. Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai.

August 5

- **Walk:** The walk through the temples of Velachery will be curated by Ms Padmapriya Baskaran. Organised by Aalayam Kanden Trust. To register: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1a_B-HIKxb-gDmtsGMuCbFF8W4THjRMA PQSgd4awZwU/htmlview

- **Walk:** Around the Boat Club Area, conducted by Sriram V, followed by breakfast at the Boat Club.

August 11

- Refreshing Royapuram Ride by bike/car covering 10 spots.

- **Walk:** *Lanes of Amjikalai*. Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai.

- * Dr. Nedunchezian speaks on *Education Scenario*. Organised by ORF, Chennai Chapter.

- **Talk:** *Caste Conflicts In Colonial Madras* by K.R.A. Narasiah. Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.

- **Talk:** Isaikavi Ramanan speaks on *Kannadasan - His Life and Times* (in Tamil).

- **Talk:** Nrithya Pillai speaks on *The Politics of Dance* (bi-lingual).

August 11-31

- *Madras Miniatures* by Pavithra Srinivasan. A series of intricate, nuanced portraits that capture Chennai that is Madras - in a new, exciting way: through miniatures. Each portrait is less than the size of your hand, and although some are of familiar sights, many bring into focus a Madras that is tucked away behind busy, ancient streets that will show a side of this city that you haven't seen before. Originally begun as a project to illustrate her new book, Pavithra Srinivasan found that this city was much more than the beach, or eateries or a hub of the Tamil Film Industry. There was more to Chennai than the traditional symbols: the Central Station or the Mylapore temples. Here was a city that possessed incredible structures full of imposing columns, carved niches and sculptures that largely went unnoticed. Organised by DakshinaChitra.

11 a.m.- 12 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com; 044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

7 a.m.-9 a.m.
Starting point: Poonamallee Blind School.
For details: niveditalouis@gmail.com; 98401 70982

10.30 am - 11.30am
Seafarers Club, Opp: Reserve Bank of India
Rajaji Salai, Chennai 600001

10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
Seafarers Club
Contact : Cycling Yogis /Ramanujar Moulana
Ph :9884023123

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
ORF-C Conference Hall, Reliance Building,
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road, Chennai 600 004

3-4 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com; 044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

4-5 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com; 044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Starts at Pezhalwar Street and temple
junction, next to the temple car.
For details, registrations: 94442 53532;
annanagarshg@gmail.com

7 a.m.-9 am.
Assembly point: IIT back gate on Velachery
Main Road.

6 a.m to 8 a.m
Rs. 800 per person.
To register: contact@pastforward.in

7 a.m.-9 a.m.
Starting point: Monegar Choultry gate.
For details: niveditalouis@gmail.com;
98401 70982

7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.
Starting point: opposite Lakshmi theatre.
For details, registrations: 94442 53532
annanagarshg@gmail.com

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
ORF-C Conference Hall, Reliance Building,
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road, Chennai 600 004.

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com;
044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

5-6.15 p.m.
Arkay Convention Center
Above Shah Electronics
146, 3rd Floor, Royapettah High Road, Mylapore.

6:45 - 8:00 p.m.
Arkay Convention Center

DakshinaChitra

August 12

- Re-enactment of the Battle of Colachel. The re-enactment staged by NCC Cadets attired in period costumes, is that of the Battle of Colachel (10 August 1741) between a Dutch East India Company force and the Travancore Army resulting in the Dutch being trounced, the first and only instance of a native Indian force decisively defeating a European one.

- **Talk:** Professor S. Swaminathan speaks on *Trees of Madras* (bi-lingual).

- **Talk:** Maruthu Mohan speaks on *Celluloid Kottai - Cinema and Politics* (in Tamil).

August 13

- **Heritage Walk:** Led by Dr. Chithra Madhavan, the walk covers Kapaliswarar Temple, Mylapore and the Vishnu temples in Chittrakulam, Mylapore. Organised by INTACH.

August 15

- **Talk:** Krupa Ge speaks on *The Day Madras Drowned* (bi-lingual).

- **Talk:** Jayaraman Raghunathan speaks on *Chennaiyin Enthiran Sujatha* (bi-lingual).

August 16-17

- Lecture on *Urban Ecology & Resilience: a case of Soaking City Chennai*, A initiative of the United Nations Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) & AARDE Foundation.

August 16

10:30 a.m. Introduction to Soaking City
11:00 a.m. Building Ecological knowledge for the regeneration cultural landscapes of South Asia
Chennai City Master Plan
12:00 p.m. Trees are the Earth's endless effort to speak to the Listening Heaven
02:00 p.m.

02:15 p.m. Chennai City - An Area
02:30 p.m. Hydrology of Chennai City
03:30 p.m. For Earth's Sake

04:30 p.m. NHyṛāy; - j kṛḥ; , yffṛāj j ṛā; t Hṛṇa xU ghhi t

August 17

09:00 a.m. Participating College Presentation
09:30 a.m. RṛWṚNHy; tḥḥḡḡy; j kṛḥ; gāḍḡhL
10:30 a.m. Chennai Weather
11:30 a.m. International Case Studies
12:15 p.m. International Case Studies
01:30 p.m. Participating college students
02:00 p.m. Adapting to Climate Change using Technology
03-05 p.m. Special Talks

August 18

- **Walk:** *Naduvakkurai to Anna Nagar walk*. Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai.

- * **Talk:** *Industry & Employment* by Mr. N. Madhavan, Associate Editor, *The Hindu Business Line* organised by ORF, Chennai Chapter.

- **Book Readings:** From S.Muthiah *Madras Rediscovered* and from N.S. Ramaswami on Madras Literary Society. Coordinated and Directed by N.S. Yamuna. Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.

- Two lectures -- Prof. V. Arasu and Prof. Azhagarasan *Exhibition on Early Tamil Alternate Magazine Movement* will be open to all after the lectures. Organised by Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL).

- **Tree Walk:** Starting outside Words and Worths. Organised by Nizhal.

- **Heritage Tour:** *Arcot Nawabs Trail in Triplicane* led by Kombai S. Anwar (van)

From August 18-August 24

- *Exhibition on Early Tamil Alternate Magazine Movement*. Organised by Roja Muthiah Research Library (RMRL).

August 19

- **Ride:** *Madras Day Heritage Ride*. OMR - Thirukazhukundram. Ride Distance : 100 km. For more information about the ride Contact Cycling Yogis /Ramanujar Moulana Ph:9884023123

- **Heritage Tour:** *Justice Party Heritage Tour - North Madras* led by Govi Lenin, Editor-in-Charge, Nakheeran (van).

- **Walk:** Bird Walk at Perumbakkam Tank. Group Size: 25. Please bring binoculars and cameras. Organised by Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS).

4 p.m.-6 p.m.
'Broken bridge area' south of Adyar Estuary by the sea side.
Organised by the Colours of Glory Foundation.

5:00 - 6:15 p.m.
Arkay Convention Center

6:45-8:00 p.m.
Arkay Convention Center

6.30 a.m.-8 a.m.
Meeting point: outside Giri Trading shop, near East Gopuram of the Kapaliswarar temple.

5:00 - 6:15 p.m.
Arkay Convention Center

6:45 - 8:00 pm
Arkay Convention Center

Raman Auditorium, AC-Tech Campus,
Anna University, Chennai

Xavier Benedict
Nalini Thakur

CMDA Chief Planner
Prime College, Nagapattinam

Dr. MGR University students
Dr. L. Elango
Dr. Sultan A Ismail
J. Rajagopalan

MIDAS Architecture College
S. Theodore Baskaran
Pradeep John
Kees de Vries (Netherlands)
Dr. Martina Girvan, London
presentation for 15 minutes
Dr. Jinu Louishidha Kitchley J

7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Starting point: Tower Park: Ayyapan temple side entrance.
For details, registrations: 94442 53532;
annanagarshg@gmail.com

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
ORF-C Conference Hall, Reliance Building,
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road, Chennai 600 004.

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com;
044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

5 p.m.
RMRL

5-6 p.m.
2nd Avenue, Besant Nagar
Registration: 98406 04912

6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Cost: Rs. 500 (Breakfast included)
Assemble at: Madras University Entrance on Wallajah Road
For registrations: kaniyanheritage@gmail.com (or) call: 94440 77171

Roja Muthiah Research Library, CPT
Campus, Taramani

5.00 a.m. - 10 a.m.
Registration is mandatory

6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Cost: Rs. 400 (Breakfast included)
Assemble at: Side entrance to Ripon Building (opp Periamet mosque)
For registrations: kaniyanheritage@gmail.com (or) call 94440 77171

Reporting time: 6.30 a.m.
Reporting Place: Bus stand opp IT Park near Toll Plaza in Perumbakkam.
Email Vjaya: gopivkumar58@gmail.com for participation. Confirmation strictly on first-come basis.

* All ORF talks are open to the public provided you register and confirm participation with your mobile number by previous Thursday. For cancellation SMS: 98410 10718.

NOTE: ● Open to all, but terms apply. Limited seating at all venues on first-come, first-served basis.

Check www.themadrasday.in for up-to-date programmes.
Promotion and Publicity: PRISM Public Relations. Email: info@prism-india.com

- **Quiz:** *The Murugappa Madras Quotient (MMQ) Quiz:* Your favourite quiz about your favorite city is back with its 8th edition and here is your chance to win name, fame & fortune for you and your school! Organised by Murugappa Group.
- **Tree Walk:** Jeth Nagar, Mandaveli. Organised by Nizhal.

August 20

- **Presentation:** *Rediscovering the graceful arch bridges of Madras* – presentation by D. Hemachandra Rao. Organised by the Press Institute of India.

August 21

- *In Kancheepuram – A photographer's journey* – presentation by D. Krishnan. Organised by PII.

August 22

- **Presentation:** *The Parthasarathy Temple, Triplicane – History, sculpture, architecture and inscriptions.* A presentation by Chithra Madhavan. Organised by PII.
- **Talk:** *Covering Sports in Madras – A Senior Journalist recalls his experiences of over fifty years* by Partab Ramchand. Organised by PII.

Till August 22

- Celebrate Chennai, Celebrate its Games. (*Chennai Kondattam, Vilayadalam, Kondadalam*) Chennai is home to a wide range of traditional games that have been played for many many years. To celebrate this rich history of games, *Kreedaa* has been conducting from July 16th, a month-long road show culminating with Madras Week. A specially decorated vehicle will travel through Chennai for over a month, visiting schools, orphanages, old age homes, offices, apartments and even metro stations. The team will carry a set of tables to set up the games and give people from all walks of life, and all ages and demographics, some insight into the magical world of traditional games of Chennai.

August 23

- **Presentation:** *Agni Vasantham – An audience with Aravaan in the streets of Chennai* by Meenakshi Madan.
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August 24

- **Lecture-demo:** *A peep into the 2000-year-old Sangam Age through Bharatanatyam* by Lakshmi Ramawamy. Organised by PII.

August 25

- **Exhibition:** Anglo Indian Crafts & Cuisine Fair. Celebrating the Anglo Indian spirit of Chennai. The Fair will offer sales of craftworks and products of current Anglo Indian entrepreneurs, mouth-watering food as cooked in homes in Royapuram, Vepery and Perambur, and, music.
- Rare book display by Madras Literary Society. Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.
- * **Talk:** *Sports and Past Time* by Dr. Sumanth Raman. Organised by ORF, Chennai Chapter.
- **Story Telling** on Madras Literary Society by Story tellers from Kadhai Kamamishu (Lavanya Srinivas). Organised by Madras Literary Society (MLS). For non-members of MLS: Rs. 100.
- **Walk:** *Butterfly Walk* at Adyar Poonga. Organised by MNS. Group size: 25. Please bring binoculars and cameras. Car parking, entrance and camera fees payable as per rules.
- **Tree Walk:** Explore the natural heritage of the Institute of Mental Health, Kilpauk. Organised by Nizhal.
- **Lecture-demo:** *Gujili Ilakkiam - Voice of the Madras layman* by Nivedita Louis. Organised by PII.
- **Tree Walk:** Chintadripet. Organised by Nizhal.

- **Walk:** *Trace Origin of Madras – 6th Annual Heritage & Eco-Walk* at Pulicat. Conducted by: Xavier Benedict. 07.00 am – Pick up at Loyola ICAM Gate 09.00 am – Pulicat Museum @ Pazhaverkadu 09.30 am – Talk on Pulicat Ecology & Built Heritage 11.00 am – Heritage Walk 01.30 pm – Lunch 02.30 pm – Light House 03.30 pm – Departure to Chennai

August 26

- **Tour:** *Tamil Jains and Madras* -- from Puzhal, Vilankadu, Thiruvallur, etc. Led by Kanaka Ajithados (van).
- **Quiz:** Military History quiz for college students. The quiz, covering the history of all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces from their colonial origins to the present-day engagement, will offer attractive cash prizes to the winning team and at least five other teams that top the contest.
- **Tree Walk:** Chitlapakkam Neer Vanam. Organised by Nizhal.

1.00 p.m. onwards
St. Bede's Auditorium, No: 37, Santhome High Road, Santhome, Chennai – 600004

5-6 p.m.
Starting outside Navasuja Sankara Nethralaya, Mandaveli.
Registration: 95000 34187

5 p.m.
Press Institute of India (PII) CPT Campus, Taramani

5 p.m.
PII

5 p.m.
PII

6 p.m.
PII

If you would like the *Kreedaa* team to visit you, email it at info@kreedagames.com or call 98417 48309.

5 p.m. Organised by PII. (PII)

5.30 p.m. Roja Muthiah Research Library
Contact: 044 2254 2551

5 p.m.
PII

10 a.m.-6 p.m.
St George's School campus, Poonamallee High Road.
Hosted by the Forum of Anglo Indian Women, Chennai

10.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com; 044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
ORF-C Conference Hall, Reliance Building, Dr. Radhakrishnan Road, Chennai 600 004

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Madras Literary Society
For details: madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com; 044 2827 9666; +91-9444253532

Reporting time: 2.15 p.m.
Email Vijay: gopivikumar58@gmail.com for participation. Confirmation strictly on first-come basis

4.30-5.30 p.m.
Starting at IMH main gate.
Registration: 98415 26431

5 p.m.
PII

5-6 p.m.
Starting at May Day Park gate
Registration: 94450 28067

To Register: info@aarde.in / +91-9884453409.

6:00 a.m to 11:30 a.m.
Cost: Rs. 500 (Breakfast included)
Assemble at Nageswara Rao Park entrance, Mylapore
For registrations: kaniyanheritage@gmail.com (or) call 94440 77171

10 a.m.-1 p.m.
CPR Convention Centre Alwarpet
Organised by the Colours of Glory Foundation

5 p.m.-6 p.m.
Chitlapakkam Neer Vanam.
Registrations @ 9840627376

- **Tree Walk:** Kotturpuram Tree Park. Organised by Nizhal. 5 to 6 pm. River View Road, Kotturpuram Registration: 97910 29568

August 27

- **Quiz:** The DakshinaChitra Heritage Quiz for school children. Open to students of 6th, 7th and 8th Standards from Matriculation, CBSE and ICSE schools. No participation fee for the Quiz. DakshinaChitra Open to students of 6th, 7th and 8th standards from Matriculation, CBSE and ICSE schools. Organised by DakshinaChitra

August 28-29

- **MADRASTICALLY – Yours.** Skit: The Story of Madras; **Photo booth and blog; Exhibition stalls** on: (1.) Madras to Chennai Food Stall (Madras street food); (2.) Black and White Tentkota (games, old cameras, old studios and production houses); (3.) Double Damakas (history of hospitals, and statues); (4.) Streetory (photos, videos and games on old streets and places of Madras); (5.) Namma Military (Military history); (6.) Display of literary works relating to Madras and old paper cuttings; (7.) Heritage walk in College Campus; (8.) Handmade greeting cards, badges, bookmarks, on Madras culture and heritage.
- **Exhibition:** A 2-day pictorial exhibition will feature images and write-ups on the history of the Indian Armed forces, besides video shows and power point presentations on the topic. Stella Maris College Organised by the Department of History and Tourism, Stella Maris College 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Stella Maris College auditorium Organised by the Colours of Glory Foundation

August 29

- **Exhibition:** Indian Cuisine – to create awareness of the diversified traditional and authentic food culture across India. Stella Maris College Organised by the Department of History and Tourism, Stella Maris College 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Stella Maris College
- **Quiz:** Quiz for School and College students. Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai. Organised by the Department of History and Tourism, Stella Maris College.

Till August 30

- *'Chennai' N Vannangal – Chapter IV.* An exhibition of art works by Madras-based artists A. Rajmohan, N. Jagadeesan, V. Ravichandran, N. Bhagavathi Sundaram and M.Ashok. The exhibition will display temple architecture, landscapes and realistic works. Organised by DakshinaChitra. DakshinaChitra

September 1

- *The Madras Quiz (Madras Open Quiz).* Organised by Murugappa Group. 1.00 p.m. onwards St. Bede's Auditorium, No: 37, Santhome High Road, Santhome, Chennai 600 004

Competitions

- Photography competition on *Bazaars of Chennai* for 15 years and above. Participants can send the photographs to mcfindia@gmail.com before **5th August**. The selected photographs will be on display at DakshinaChitra Museum till the end of August. The best three photographs will be uploaded on our social media.
- *Make your social history album/scrap book for age group 8-16 (individual).* Start with a 4 generation family tree (minimum), add pictures, plan of your house (before and now), write stories, add function invitations, postcards, sketches etc – and how your family moved to Anna Nagar, When? How? Why? How your family history is related to Anna Nagar? Prizes will be distributed and selected works will be displayed and felicitated in the "2nd – Anna Nagar Social history exhibition, which is to be conducted in August. Details of the event and venue will be communicated during registration. **Submission on or before August 12th 2018.** Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai. For details: 91-94442 53532 / annanagarshg@gmail.com
- *Video or Power Point presentation for above 15 years (2-5 persons).* How your family moved to Anna Nagar, When? How? Why? How your family history is related to Anna Nagar? **Submission on or before August 12th 2018.** Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai. For details: 91-94442 53532/ annanagarshg@gmail.com
- *Quiz on Anna Nagar.* 19th August 2018. **Registration before August 15th, 2018.** Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai. For details: 91-94442 53532/annanagarshg@gmail.com
- *Drawing Competition – Junior / Senior Level.* (Age 2-5, 6-11, 11 and above) Topic on the spot. **Registration: Before August 15th 2018.** Organised by Nam Veedu, Nam Oor, Nam Kadhai. For details: 91-94442 53532/ annanagarshg@gmail.com
- *Essay Competition for Senior Citizens.* The Senior Citizens Group of Besant Nagar and Mylapore (SCGOBNN) are organising an annual essay competition for senior citizens during the Madras Week. The topic is 'What does Madras Day mean to me in my twilight years'? The essay competition is open to all. There is no entry fee. The essay is to be submitted in Word format (without any attachments) in English (about 600 words) to scgobn@gmail.com latest by **August 10**. Prizes will be awarded for the ten best entries. For details: Prof V.Chandrasekhar, President SCGOBNN: 9884224480
- **Presentation:** Heritage of Chennai – Multimedia Presentation Contest for city schools. Contest date: August 21. **Submissions close on Aug. 11.** E-mail to: themadrasday@gmail.com – and get the approval for your theme from us before you start working on the project. Organised by *Mylapore Times*. The contest encourages city school students to explore Chennai's heritage and present the topic given to you in multi-media form. The contest is open to school children studying in classes 8 to 12. The theme for this year is: **City's Natural Heritage.** Guidelines: Choose a unique nature space in the city which has its own history – a wildlife region, a river, an estuary, a lake, a scrub jungle, sand dunes. Study the natural scape, its character, its history and the unique features of this place. Study its condition today. Take classy photos, make notes, talk to people in the know. Then, put it down in a snappy PowerPoint Presentation for the 'live' Contest. A school can send only one team. Each team must have 3 members and all 3 members must take turns to make this one presentation.

Tips

1. Ask your school teacher-adviser to seek the approval of your theme from the organisers.
2. We look for multi-media rich projects so make sure your project has all the features in it.
3. The PowerPoint presentation must have only key points and visuals. Not packed with info. (On each slide, you must have a maximum of just 3 lines, each line 5 words only).
4. At the contest venue, your team of 3 students will take turns at the mike to present the project using the PP. You can use your notes for reference as you speak. The presentation in PowerPoint on the approved theme will have to be done by all the three participants. It can be done in English or in Tamil or a mix!
5. The duration of the complete presentation – PowerPoint and Oral – should not exceed 10 minutes. Participants should be prepared to answer on-the-spot questions from the judges.
6. The PowerPoint presentation **need not be** submitted to the organisers. The team should retain a copy of your project on a pen-drive or copy it to an electronic device and bring it to the venue of the contest. The organiser will provide a PC and a projector at the venue to help you make your presentation.
7. Contest is open to first 20 teams to register on first-come-first-serve basis.
8. The contest will take place on Aug.21 from 9.30 am to 3.30 pm with a 30 mins. Lunch Break (you need to bring your lunch!). Venue: Srinivasa Sastri Hall, Luz, Mylapore. (Report at 9 am to download your PP onto our PC)
9. The best **Three** presentations will be awarded trophies, gifts and certificates. All participants will be given certificates. The prizes will be given at about 3.30 pm.
10. Prizes will be awarded based on quality of research / quality of visuals and points / presentation format and answers to the questions posed by the judges.

Instinct powered CSK...

The triumph of Chennai Super Kings in the IPL comes as the very anterior of the performance metrics and statistics-loaded approach of the scientific world of modern sport. The victory pays no compliment to the 'Moneyball' way of hiring smart with the Sabermetric method of scouting and analysing players. The CSK chose its players on pure instinct, on familiarity and 'cricketing' knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. This is more like the racehorse trainer method of recommending a thoroughbred.

Chennai Super Kings is no Oakland Athletics baseball team. It has never been cash-strapped in its nine of 11 seasons in the IPL. Where CSK is so different from the Oakland team is in its betting on instinct to pick players it is happy with rather than go the modern way of soaking up the stats and picking the undervalued lot and try to assemble a competitive team at economical pricing.

No Sabermetrics for CSK, only pure old instinct of its wise

coach Stephen Fleming and its experienced skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. It appeared they didn't even have the calendar app to keep track of their players' birthdays because age was

● by **R. Mohan**
Resident Editor,
Deccan Chronicle,
Chennai

not a factor in their choice of players either. They seemed to believe that the older the cricketer, the brainier his performance in a format that is otherwise thought to be an increasingly young man's game.

The IPL teams tend to come to the auction tables after a load of research into player analytics like their batsmen's T-20 strike rates and the economy rates of their bowlers, with the new ball and at the death. While most would like to believe that the cheque books of the owners are always good for the escalating

bids on players, there are teams that have made it their business to buy smart, as Kings XI Punjab may have done with Chris Gayle. There was no guarantee he would last the course though.

What makes the CSK approach so different is in pinning faith in an ageing set of players just because they are familiar with them. But, as Dhoni explained, it was their knowledge of the player's fitness levels that was germane to sport and not age. This is unusual thinking in an age in which the computer is the boss, because it can at the touch of a button spew out analytics and statistics on every aspect of a cricketer's game, much as analytics-obsessed Pro Sport of USA does in detailing players' game analyses.

"It is a great dynamic. It is about using the strength of a remarkable captain, with a strong franchise, with a good game plan," said coach Fleming even as he praised his captain's handling of the ageing battler Shane Watson, who was wrapped in cotton wool, his



M.S. Dhoni.

work as an all-rounder cut and his placement in the inner circle designed to leave all his energies free for smacking the ball out of the park from his slot at the top of the order.

"We always like players who are multi-talented," Fleming said of the man who singlehandedly made the chase in the final seem so easy. And to think he was considered "a failure" at Royal Challengers, Bangalore where he batted in the middle order. This indicated that man management had done the trick and not a table of averages and strike rates.

The X factor in CSK's cricket was its easy dressing room atmosphere in which



Stephen Fleming.

Dhoni's Captain Cool avatar is most beneficent. It would be fair to say CSK is a players' team as much as Dhoni is the cricketer's cricketer and 'Minimum Management' has been the mantra of the owners. Maybe, that is one reason why a team with nine men over 30 could win the IPL, that too with a team picked on the captain's instincts rather than a computer programme. This is not the way of modern cricket, which is said to suffer from 'paralysis by analysis', as one England cricketer put it. But Dhoni's way has often surprised by being the best and this is just another instance of sporting instinct prevailing. (Courtesy: Straight Bat).

Chennai Super Kings were deservedly crowned IPL XI Champions, 2018. The victory in the final was authoritative and emphatic as the power-packed century from the blade of a Australian all-rounder Shane Watson's was.

CSK was among the fancied sides to lift the IPL XI trophy despite the fact that - to be honest indeed - their bowling attack was a bit ragged. Plus they had 11 players above the age of 30. Some of us locals were initially peeved that there were not many Tamil Nadu players in its ranks as before. This was particularly distressing as CSK had a whole lot of players who had never played first class cricket while the experienced State players had to seek pastures in other franchises.

Test opener Murali Vijay, who had excellent outings for

CSK during the early years of the IPL and had also done well for Kings XI Punjab in 2016, including a short stint as Captain, played just one game for CSK. The other Tamil Nadu players Narayan Jagadeesan, just could not break in as it could've been only at the expense of Dhoni.

It was certainly hard that Ravichandran Ashwin was not bought at the auction while the choice fell on former Indian off-spinner Harbhajan, however, was not used for more than two overs in each of the games that he played.

Ravindra Jadeja too bowled just 24 balls in CSK's first four games put together. Some even

... helped by Watson, Rayudu

● by **A Special Correspondent**

joked that he was playing as a specialist fielder and South African leg spinner Imran Tahir too got few opportunities.

Undoubtedly, South African paceman Lungi Ngidi was the outstanding user of the new ball in the tournament. His economy rate and his length and line made him an extremely difficult bowler for the opposition batsman. Ngidi's pace was disconcerting and his death bowling was most penetrative than even the experienced Bravo. He was CSK's best purchase.

Rajasthan seamer Deepak Chahar was a good choice to use the new ball and was extremely useful to the side. Perhaps, the franchise owners could've picked up one of the State's most successful seamer, Krishnamoorthy Vignesh too instead of some raw and untested players. Mumbai's Shardul Thakur was disappointing. While his 'knuckle' ball was both a flop and bluff, it is her that a Tamil Nadu seamer would've proved to be ideal.

In spite of these initial disappointments plus the early injuries, CSK supporters stood solidly behind their team. Veterans Watson and Dwayne Bravo gave their best to the side's ascendancy during the tournament with both and ball. The England players pacemen Mark

Wood and left-arm David Willey and batsman Sam Billings were found wanting.

The success of CSK was without doubt batsman Ambati Rayudu. It was a good ploy on Dhoni's part to send him in as an opener with Watson. When South African captain Faf du Plessis was used as an opener, Rayudu was dropped to number four and struggled in that position. Apart from one innings, du Plessis was a flop in the top slot. He would've ideally suited CSK at number four.

Rayudu was the new MVP for the franchise with his most prolific IPL season: 586 runs in 15 innings at a strike rate of 153. What was special about Rayudu was that he converted even good balls into boundary balls with his nifty footwork. He stepped down the track to 50 balls this season and hit 133 runs without being dismissed.

The CSK fielding was good despite the fact that most of its fielders were in the 30 plus group. Their slow-moving legs did come into the spotlight. CSK's ground fielding was - as one must admit - full of bloopers, but they have tried to cover up for that with their catching. Having taken 82.7 per cent of catches in the league stage, CSK finished among the best catching sides this season. Only

Mumbai Indians fared better.

"They're 35-36, not 55-56. A massive amount has been made of it. I'm here to win the competition for the franchise. And that's why we value experience because we think it gives us the best chance... Dwayne Bravo, Shane Watson and MS Dhoni all these guys still have a lot of cricket left to play," said Stephen Fleming on CSK's ageing squad.

Fleming relentlessly kept bidding for the Australian all-rounder, Shane Watson, and ultimately bought him for four times his base price of Rs.1crore. And Watson repaid the faith, featuring in all but one match for CSK, scoring 438 runs in 14 innings at a strike rate of 145.03. He singlehandedly won the game for Rajasthan Royals in Pune with a 51-ball century and then came his 57-ball 117 not out in the final.

Dhoni proved to be a truly evergreen hero for CSK. His dot ball percentage was truly lower this year and, more importantly, he was the top-scorer in the death overs this season with 297 runs off 148 balls, including 24 sixes and 16 fours, at an average of nearly 100. The power game that seemed to be fading resurfaced again at times, helping him to score 455 runs in 15 innings at a strike rate of 150.66. He was not at his best but Fleming considered his batting "excellent".

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From India's Digital Archives

– Karthik Bhatt

● The Digital Library of India (DLI) project, an initiative of the Central Government, aims at digitising significant artistic, literary and scientific works and making them available over the Internet for education and research. Begun in 2000 by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India and later taken over by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, it has to date scanned nearly 5.5 lakh books, predominantly in Indian languages.

The archives of the DLI contain a huge collection of books on old Madras and various institutions that were/are part of its landscape. While these include the more famous ones, such as the *Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*, *Story of Madras* by Glyn Barlow, and *Madras in the Olden Times* by James Tallboys Wheeler, several out-of-print publications too are part of the collection. This column will profile some of them.

A dozen portrayed

The book featured here, *Representative Men of Southern India* by Govinda Parameswaran Pillai (1896), is a compilation of brief sketches of eminent personalities of the 19th Century from the region.

Born in 1864, G.P. Pillai, as the author was known was a multifaceted personality. Educated at the Maharajah's College in Trivandrum and the Presidency College in Madras, he qualified as a barrister in England. He was one of the key members of the Indian National Congress in its early years, serving as its secretary in 1894 and 1898. Amongst his achievements as a political activist was the Malayali Memorial, which strove for reservation of qualified persons at par with the numerical strength of the communities. In 1892, he took over as the Editor of the *Madras Standard*, a paper that had been

founded in 1877. He came into close contact with Mahatma Gandhi, who used its pages to write extensively on the grievances of Indians in South Africa. In his autobiography *Experiments with Truth*, the Mahatma writes warmly about his relationship with G.P. Pillai, who passed away when he was 39.

In the preface to the book, G.P. Pillai laments that "while the biographies of several eminent men of Bengal and Bombay have been published, India knows little or nothing of the greatest men of South India." In an attempt to set this right, he started a column titled 'Our Portrait Gallery' in the *Madras Standard* which contained brief biographical sketches of eminent Indians. This book is a collection of twelve of these sketches. While the book profiles some of those

whose lives have been well documented, such as Sir T. Madhava Row and Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer, it also profiles people such as Sir Savalai Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Rao Bahadur T. Gopala Row, Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty (MM, February 15th, 2011) and V. Ramiengar, whose achievements and contributions have been long forgotten.



Anticlockwise from left: V. Rameingar, Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty, Rao Bahadur T. Gopala Rao, Sir Savalai Ramaswamy Mudaliar and Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer.

Born in 1832, Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer's humble beginnings were no indicator of the fame and distinction he would achieve as a jurist. Compelled to work at an early age due to his family circumstances, Muthuswamy Iyer completed his studies thanks to the benevolence of his employer, the village Tahsildar. Joining government service, he held several positions such as Deputy Collector and Magistrate of Arcot and, later, Tanjore. Remarkably, he appeared for his BL Examinations during his time as a Magistrate and acquired a First Class. In 1878, he became the first Indian to become a Judge of the Madras High Court.

If Muthuswamy Iyer's rags to riches story is remarkable, no less inspiring is the profile of Rao Bahadur Thandalam Gopala Row. Born in a Tanjore Marathi family, Gopala Row

had little by way of formal education. Having learnt Marathi and Sanskrit from his father, he joined the Education Department as a First Assistant in the Provincial School at Kumbakonam. He graduated with a B.A. Degree in 1859 with a First Class. He was placed in sole charge of the Kumbakonam College between 1872 and 1874, where he became renowned as a Maths and English scholar but was never appointed its Principal. In 1878, he was transferred to the Presidency College, where he spent the last years of his life. He passed away in 1886. Rich tributes were paid by eminent personalities such as Rev Dr. Miller, who wrote that "few of the educated sons of Southern India held so high a place in the regard of the Natives and English equally."

Dewan V Ramiengar, a

member of the renowned Vembakkam clan, was a distinguished civil servant, serving the Government in various capacities during his career. He was the first Indian to serve as an official member of the Madras Legislative Council. On retiring from the service in 1880, he was appointed as Dewan of Travancore, where he is credited with having brought about several educational and revenue reforms and revamping the judicial system in the State.

G.P. Pillai brought out another book titled *Representative Indians* the next year, comprising the sketches of 40 personalities from across the country. It was published in London, with a preface by Sir Richard Temple. *The Madras Standard* got a new lease of life in 1914, when it was bought over by Annie Besant, who renamed it *New India*.

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