

INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- Connemara restored
- Best bird sanctuary
- Tamil magazines
- The TNPL winners

MADRAS MUSINGS

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

Vol. XXVIII No. 14

November 1-15, 2018

A nod or two for restoration

(by The Associate Editor)

It is not often that we at *Madras Musings* have occasion to celebrate when it comes to heritage. Most of our stories are gloom and doom, chiefly documenting official apathy and wilful neglect that results in various grandiose edifices biting the dust. But in this festive season, we do have a reason to rejoice. We, a few days ago, saw the low profile restoration of the Second World War shelter that had for long remained neglected by the seashore at Kasimedu. This marked the culmination of some concerted action by several agencies and we are glad to report that *Madras Musings* too played a role in it.

The concrete air-raid shelter, also known as the pillbox owing to its design, was one of several put up all along the seacoast by the administration of Sir Arthur Hope, during the first three years of the WWII. Weighing several hundred tonnes, it was probably cast in-situ and apart from its massive walls, it also has evidences of metal plating on the inside. Narrow windows provide a lookout and also enable the positioning of anti-aircraft guns. Records on these shelters are non-existent today and, indeed, there is no proof of ownership either. The last named was a bane and a boon, when it came to the recent restoration of this particular shelter, the last survivor of its kind.

It had remained neglected for years and served among other things as a dwelling, a public convenience and a rubbish dump. It would have gone on that way, hardly noticed by passersby had it not been for it lying plumb in the middle of the route for a proposed pipeline of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). That necessitated bringing down the shelter and demolition work began in October 2017. That was when *Madras Musings* was alerted about this and carried an article in its issue dated December 16, 2017. *The Hindu*, one of the supporters of *Madras Musings*, followed up and the city news desk published a detailed story. That got the IOCL interested and they willingly suspended the demolition.

The Corporation of Chennai was kind enough to offer its services for shifting the structure to the Museum if the latter was willing to host it and, more importantly, if the owner of the shelter had no objection. A scramble began on establishing ownership over the bunker. The ASI and the Army had no records. Strictly speaking, the structure was *poromboke*, for it stood on public land and nobody had a claim over it. The IOCL then offered to retain the shelter at site and, what's more, decided to repair whatever damage had been done by way of demolition.

This was soon attended to, the quick action being possible chiefly because there were no conflicting Government depart-



The Connemara Hotel, Madras's oldest and now the Taj Connemara, celebrates a 2-year restoration (see page 5).



The pillbox in Kasimedu after restoration by the Indian Oil Corporation. But note the litter already around it. (Pictures by R. Raja Pandiyan.)

Are conditions for 'Ease of Living' poor in State?

A healthy practice is in place over the last three years or so to measure the efficacy of public services in terms of **outcomes**. The latest one in the series is the Ease of Living Index at the initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, of the Central Government. The survey, commenced in January 2018, is a bit too early to test the status of Ease of Living when governments are still grappling with this problem of many ramifications.

The survey covers 111 cities in the country, the evaluation based on four pillars, as they are called, namely, institutional, social, economic and physical facilities. Under this main classification there are 15 parameters and 78 indicators. Based on data received for these main and sub-main parameters

scores are assigned and aggregated to rank cities for performance.

On a *prima facie* reading of scores/ranks, Tamil Nadu's performance is as follows. No

● by A Special Correspondent

Tamil Nadu city has made it to the top ten out of the 111 cities assessed. Among the first 50 cities ranked, 12 Tamil Nadu cities have come in, but that may not be saying much. Only Tiruchirappalli and Chennai are in ranks 12 and 14 respectively, which is some consolation, ranking within the first 15

out of a field of 111. The overall score is set against a maximum of 100 and Chennai scores 47.24. This is not a high score. Pune is declared the best city for ease of living, but with a score of only 58.11. It is a sad commentary that for Ease of Living in the country the best score is only 58. This means that the country, as a whole, is not doing well for Ease of Living. Chennai can console itself by claiming that its score of 47.24 is as high as 81% of the best performer! Another doubtful consolation is that Chennai is Number 2 in position among larger cities with over 4 million population, below Greater Mumbai at number 1 with a score of as low as 57.78. The

survey shows that most things are bad in most places and most things in most places must be improved. Didn't we know this already?

Often physical data, in terms of numbers, reflect a good picture while actual experience of beneficiaries turns out to be disappointing because of poor delivery. The outcome must, therefore, be evaluated by direct access to a large enough sample of beneficiaries to determine whether numerical compliance matches beneficiary satisfaction. This part of the evaluation is important to know the "real" situation and must be highlighted in future reports.

The survey, being in the early stages, suffers from inadequate data. Some of the

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)

'EASE OF LIVING' IN TAMIL NADU

(Continued from page 1)

respondent cities were unprepared to provide the necessary data. Those who did not give data, penalised by zero mark, are losing in the race. It is quite probable that good performers, who did not have data to provide, have been relegated as poor performers in the findings. Delhi ranks 65 because of its failure to provide data. Delhi's rank would, arithmetically, have been surely better had they provided the data.

The results of this survey are of limited practical value at this stage as States are still trying to clear the cobwebs of the past. Ease of Living calls for reforms in many areas that touch our daily needs – gas connection, power supply, clean water supply, driving licence renewal, school vicinity, school admission, condition of our own street, sanitation, bank access, mobility, play space, sense of security and so on. Building the data base over such a vast range of services is a task that states are grappling with.

Of all the sub-indexes of this survey, the physical component is the most important and has been rightly assigned a weightage of 45 per cent. The Report on the internet does not provide break-up of performance in respect of 46 indicators on the physical supports for Ease of Living. These should also be provided for city administrations to recognise specific deficiencies in performance. The physical component encompasses housing and inclusiveness, power supply, transportation and mobility, assured

water supply, waste water management, solid waste management and reduced pollution. Some of these are the focus of important initiatives like AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) which covers water, sewerage, stormwater drainage, public transport and amenities, the Smart Cities Mission with covering redevelopment, green-field developments and pan-city application of smart solutions, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, envisioning housing for all by 2022, and Swachh Bharat Mission for better sanitation. Future reports of the Ease of Living Survey would throw more meaningful information on the progress of these major initiatives.

Such a survey, carried out annually, would highlight good and bad performances, acting as a mirror to city administrations. The National Achievement Survey 2017, based on a study of education in 700 districts in the country, the 2017 Report of *Swachh Survekshan* by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and the Social Progress Index by the Institute for Social Competitiveness, India, are other studies focusing on different aspects of welfare. All of them should be coordinated to avoid duplication and should adopt a common consistent yardstick.

To the question – Are conditions for Ease of Living poor in Tamil Nadu? – the answer is 'yes', but we are in the company of low performers all round, reflecting a countrywide need for accelerating measures to make Living Easier.

Two nods for restoration

(Continued from page 1)

ments squabbling over it. The shelter was given a coat of paint as well and gleams now. The IOCL has cordoned off the structure and also offered to put up a plaque on it, explaining its history. The route of the proposed pipeline has been changed so that the shelter remains undisturbed. The IOCL will also hopefully maintain the structure.

It is rather ironic that while several edifices of the city have bitten the dust or continue to crumble, the humble pillbox has proved a survivor, almost like Cinderella. It was thanks to coordinated effort among various agencies that there was success. Now if only the YMIA read this and began focusing on

Gokhale Hall, or the SBI thought of what could be done to its magnificent First Line Beach office or the LIC pondered over *Bharat Insurance Building* the same way, the future of heritage in Chennai could be a lot brighter.

Editor's Note: Your Editor being of Word War II vintage, has a rather different view about air raid shelters and pillboxes/bunkers. The latter were meant as 'mini-forts' for defensive purposes, in this case, coastal defence. Machine guns were their main weaponry. Air raid shelters were 'civilian' spaces, meant to be shelters for the local public during an air raid. Would be glad to hear the views of someone from the Army.

Rain, rain, where art thou?

The *Man from Madras Musings* looks out via the window even as he types this. In the sky above, there is not a cloud and yet this was the date that the weathermen/women had given out for the arrival of the monsoon. The rains have tricked the Met Office twice over – the first time in mid October when the combination of two cyclones, one on the east coast and the other on the west was cited as enough reason for an early onset of the monsoon, and the second being this glorious sunshine-filled day at end October. Now, so MMM learns from a news release, the weather people are saying the rains are just five days away.

Chennai residents are understandably worried. Last fortnight's water-tanker strike showed what havoc shortage of water can cause to highrises and IT Parks, all of which are striking proofs of our city being well on its way to becoming *Chennapole*. But then not everyone is concerned. The Chennai Metrowater and Sewerage Board is delighted for it has just embarked on what promises to be a rather long

and babies were rocked to sleep – all very domestic and a scene that MMM did not complain about. But he did have second thoughts when the workers, and babies used the garden as an open toilet as well. In these days of *Swacch Bharath*, MMM can only hope the women found some toilet to use. The offer to use a servant's toilet in the house did not meet with encouraging response. These are people who prefer the wide open spaces.

At the end of the day, three huge craters had opened up, all of which made entry and exit from *chez MMM* quite a challenge. On day two, when according to the supervisor, the stormwater channels were to be laid, there was deathly silence, with not a worker in sight, even as sewage filled the pits. The workers are yet to come back as this column goes to press. But the stagnant water in the caverns is a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.

MMM now realises that the workers, when they said they needed three days to complete the task, did not mean three consecutive days. What they

may, the smell-free inspection does open up possibilities. Perhaps there are agencies that offer personnel who are free from BO.

'IF YOU NEED GOOD FRIEND IN YOUR AREA CALL ME OR WHATS UP ME' ran a second one. It made MMM wonder as to how the sender knew the area where MMM lived. Also, the sender must be a really gregarious person, if friends could be rustled up from any area and for any area. Truly, some people are really friendly.

In the meanwhile there is no let up when it comes to messages from massage parlours. The latest offers are from what claims to be a newly opened spa. It specialises in wine massages, whatever that means, done by '3 female therapist'. MMM assumes that the expression 'sic' is to be added after that one. An added attraction is that the same spa offers a diamond facial for free if we avail of its wine massage by 3 female therapist. As to what a diamond facial is, MMM has no clue. He has read somewhere that the diamond is among the hardest

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

and leisurely dig all around the city. Everywhere you go you find mysterious bags filled with soil lining the footpaths even as gangs of workmen crush the concrete, asphalt and whatever else that goes into defining that narrow sliver of space that is allotted to the pedestrians. Closer enquiry reveals that these are for improving the stormwater drains so that as and when (and if and when as well) it rains, we ought to be ready for a swift clearing away of the surface water.

Ask any of the supervisors as to why the great dig had to begin just when the monsoons are (hopefully) around the corner and you have them flummoxed. They blush, they twiddle their thumbs and admit that you have a point there. But what can be done, they go on to ask, for such is the tendering process and the speed at which it is gone through that work can begin only when the rains are just arriving.

The curse came upon MMM a fortnight or so ago, when gangs of workmen and women arrived at his doorstep and began breaking the footpath. The work would be completed in three days flat, they said, even as they went about their task. These toilers move around en-familie and so the children made themselves comfortable in MMM's front garden. Hammocks were suspended from tree branches

had meant were three working days interspersed with several long breaks. MMM is now left wondering if an early onset of monsoon is such a good thing after all.

Eats, Shoots and Leaves

That if you recollect was the title of a best-selling book that dealt with punctuation errors. *The Man from Madras Musings* was reminded of this when he recently came across several interesting messages, in print and sent via telephone.

"Offer 10% Pest Control Services for Cockroaches, Termites, Bedbugs with out smell FREE INSPECTION at UR home or Office" ran the first one and it made MMM wonder as to whether the service offered was for the benefit of the pests listed. In which case, it would eliminate the humans that coexisted with these insects. The other question that MMM had was about 'Smell Free Inspection'. Most service personnel who come to attend to household or office repairs smell to the high heavens, what with our spice-rich diet, plenty of honest sweat, a tendency to smoke like chimneys and a fondness for polyester fibre in clothes, thereby leaving behind a rich aroma long after they have left. MMM is no snob, but there are days when he does wonder if these people would not have been better off investing in a deodorant. Be that as it

substances known and, so, whatever this is, it is bound to be painful. But all that is nothing compared to this one – Best relaxing full body pain relief massage! Oil, Thai, Aroma Massage Avl! Dne by wel trained South and North FE-MALES!

And then there are those resorts that are running empty when our legislators are not staying in them. The latest offer from these is Rs 4,000 worth VIP Cracker Box, if you stay there for eight days. MMM assumes that the VIP Cracker is the only instrument by means of which you can evict a legislator from a resort. That is apart from an adverse High Court judgement of course.

Tailpiece

Dovetailing with all the above is a poster that *The Man from Madras Musings* espied on all the pillars of our Metrorail down Pallavaram way. "To Let: Bachelor, Family, Office, Godown" it ran. MMM was really intrigued at the number of ways in which people are making money. He never knew bachelors and families are available on hire. If that be so, why is the bachelor not hiring the family and vice versa? On that happy note, here is to a great Deepavali, filled with light but not crackers, in keeping with Supreme Court norms.

–MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Endangered parks

The implications of Geeta Doctor's passing mention of the CMRL's plans for an underground line/station (MM, October 1, 2018), has me all knotted up. Much as I would like to shut my eyes to the fact, soil testing *aka* 'Geotechnical' testing, is indeed going on within the Chetpet Eco Park which lies alongside the existing Central-Kilpauk-Airport Metro line. The Kilpauk Metro station is a minute or two walk from the Park. So, what does the new Metro plan propose? And, to cut to the chase, will it be the beginning of the end of the Eco Park?

My impatience and fears are not unfounded. In 2011, I was

among those who were silent witnesses to CMRL's takeover of the circular 9-acre Thiru-Vi-Ka Park in Shenoy Nagar where I have been staying for a little over 40 years. There were officially put up notice boards outside the covered park carrying the break-up of the number of trees (believed to be 300) in the park, number to be transplanted, those that were to face the axe and trees that would see the light of day in the 'restored' park. But here's the rub. Post-May 2017, after the Metro station was inaugurated, the authorities have had better ideas than restoring the park. With headlines like 21K sq.ft underground facility to come up at Shenoy metro' hopes of old-timers and every green enthusi-

ast have been dashed. Today, nine months down the line, more trees, visible to residents living around the park, have said their last goodbyes.

Waking up to the dangers of the commercialisation of the park, we, the residents ran a signature campaign, met CMRL and Chennai Corporation officials, the MP and MLA and posted a petition to the Chief Minister. To seek clarity, we filed a petition under the RTI to which we have got no response. While, we continue talking to anyone who would care to listen, contractors are busy at work in the 9-acre site where once stood the Thiru-Vi-Ka Park. As for the CMRL's latest plans for the Park restoration, residents like me have our doubts about any newfangled replacement.

Back to my question on the fate of the Eco Park. Mind you, the word 'park', developed at a cost of Rs 42 crore, pays no justice to what is definitely an environmental model. Reduced to its bare minimum, the Eco

Park is all of 16 acres of water and land-spread ringed by a 1.2 km walkers' path. The park also abounds in greenery. At a time when there's a sense of urgency about preserving and maintaining water bodies and open spaces, will our need for transportation ride rough shod over the cause of the environment?

T.K. Srinivas Chari
2A, Mithila
4/39, East II Cross Street
Shenoy Nagar
Chennai 600 030

Photo printing

I have since found two papers published in the 1856 volume of the *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, one by Tripe and another by Jesse Mitchell on printing of photographs. I provide below the complete bibliographic details of both, the Tripe and Mitchell articles:

1. Tripe, L., 1856, 'On a photographic printing process', *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, 1 (N.S.), issue 1, pages 166-170.

2. Mitchell, J., 1856, 'Description of a plain or, waxed paper process in photography', *Madras Journal of Literature & Science*, 1 (N.S.), issue 1, pages 71-81.

Both articles are freely available on the Internet.

Notable that Tripe had sent the above communication to be read at one of the ordinary meetings of the Madras Photographic Society (MPS), while he was in his last phase of service in India, attached to the 12th Regiment, Native Infantry, Bangalore. This paper was read at an MPS meeting by J.D. Scott, Madras Artillery. In this article, Tripe indicates that his formula was developed on that then popularised by Thomas Sutton of Jersey, which involved the use of gold hyposulphite as the toning agent.

These details shall interest and benefit those interested in the evolution of photography in Madras.

Dr. A. Raman
anant@raman.id.au

Printer's Devil leaves story unfinished

● The Printer's Devil was at work on the last issue of *Madras Musings* (October 16th) and rather unfortunately forgot to deliver on his commitment to continue on page 6 what he had promised on page 5: to continue the last portion of the Jagdish shop story. We regret the carelessness and make good the omission, starting from what might be considered the beginning of a second part of the story.

—The Editor

Mylapore was not a geographical spot. It was a social phenomenon. It was India's legal brain and centre of culture comprising music, dance, temples, colourful festivals, early morning *marghazhi bhajans* and a school of considerable repute that produced India's senior civil servants. Mylapore also provided constitutional architects, Supreme Court judges, great jurists, a silver-tongued orator reputed to have known all the words in the Oxford Dictionary, freedom fighters, musicologists, composers, poets. Mastery of Law was the speciality. If you were born in Mylapore you could not have helped being an eminent lawyer. Every girl of marriageable age aspired to marry into a Mylapore lawyer's family. The heroine, Miss Malini, in a movie of that title, sang the lyrics composed by Kothamangalam

Subbu, also a Mylaporean: *Mylapore Vakkeelaatthu Maattuponnaavaen!*

Edward Elliot's Road marked the northern boundary of Mylapore. This one road could boast of many luminaries—T.R. Venkatrama Sastri (jurist), Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri (whose mastery of the English language astonished the British), Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer (lawyer), E.V. Srinivasan (ophthalmologist, who was seen in his Rolls Royce), C. Rajam (founder of Madras Institute of Technology) and lesser known, but no less distinguished, Chief Engineer Ramasundaram who made a name for himself for building several airstrips in the country in record time to prepare India against possible external attack during the Second World War. Rajam lived in a palatial house called *India House*, at the junction of Mowbray's Road. Bus conductors would shout *India House!* with extra gusto perhaps to express their awe of the imposing bungalow, to alert passengers desiring to disembark in that area. *India House* was later acquired by S.S. Vasan, celebrated as India's Cecil B. de Mille as he was the forerunner in producing movies with spectacular settings at costs running to several lakhs at the then value. Somewhat diagonally opposite, on

Mowbray's Road, was *Farm House*, the residence of Kasturi Gopalan and Kasturi Srinivasan, owners of India's premier newspaper, *The Hindu*. Also adjacent was the spacious compound called *Dare House* that was residence of the Butchi Babu family that produced some of the naturally gifted sports persons in tennis, cricket and golf.

Jagdish's shop was outside the charmed Mylapore boundary, lying, as it did, on the wrong side of the dividing Edward

was Mahalingam, a pioneer by his own right, living in his modest apartment. He was a sales executive of George Oakes, an English company that imported luxury cars. Almost all cars then owned by the elite of south Madras were bought through Mali who used to bring different models to the door-step of the high and the mighty for them to try before buying. In motor car marketing, Mali was much ahead of his time. He made owning a second-hand car respectable and put this

whose statue stands in front of the General Hospital. Dr. Rangachari was known for his compassion and treatment of the poor. Doctors of repute, such as Narayanaswamy and Sankaran, would make home visits at request. They would come, dressed in spotless white, in a Morris Minor or Standard Eight with their kit carried by an accompanying assistant. Prescriptions, that were recipes for a liquid mixture of appropriate drugs in required proportion, would be compounded by qualified pharmacists in a nearby medical shop. Ready-made patented and branded tablets, capsules and liquids had not come in to vogue. The mixtures, however, did the trick.

Although this stretch around Jagdish's shop in south Royapettah had enough to boast about, the residents still preferred the prestigious Mylapore badge. No one in the area would want to call oneself a Royapettan. The shadow of Mylapore was enough to claim pedigree. Mylapore had its aura and magic and willingly cast its embrace over the southern fringe of Royapettah. But, over the decades, the uniqueness, leisure and simple charm are gone and with them the sprightly little social symbols like Jagdish's shop.

● by
N.S. Parthasarathy

Elliot's Road (now Radhakrishnan Saalai). This fringe was the last outpost of Mylaporeanism. As if Mylapore was at a loss to find space for all its famous citizens, the surplus eminence overflowed on to southern part of Royapettah which accounts for the importance of Jagdish's location. Around Jagdish's shop, within a mile radius, were Raja Iyer, Advocate General, A.V. Raman, civil servant of the English era and close associate of Rajaji, and C.R. Srinivasan and Khasa Subba Rao, both nationally known Journalists. And there

status symbol within reach of the emerging professional upper middle class. In the automobile business, Mali is still a name recalled with respect; the company in his name, even today, dominates the car market presided over successfully by another Mali, grandson of the original.

It is difficult to overlook mention of Rangachari Home and Ranga Nursing Home both in this area run by Dr. Narayanaswamy and Dr. Sankaran, respectively. They were senior physicians who worked with the legendary Dr. Rangachari

All that's left is a road and an area name

It gave its name to an entire suburban district of our city – Chromepet. But of the factory or the several acres it occupied at one time, there is not a trace. In its time, it was a well-known employer of the city and its products found a ready market in India and abroad.

The Chrome Leather Works was founded by George Alexander Chambers in 1913. He was an old Madras hand, having first come here in 1894, at the age of 26. For ten years prior to this, he had worked in the leather trade in London. Arriving in Madras, he worked his way up in a private company whose name is not known and, in 1903, opted to branch out on his own. This was a trading entity and he exported hides and skins. But his heart was in setting up a tannery of his own and, within a few months of being in business, he managed to cobble the necessary capital to set up such a facility in Pallavaram, then “12 miles distant from Madras”. Here he pioneered the process of chrome tanning in the country.

The firm of Simpson & Co became interested, for this was an era when they were into making custom-designed carriages and needed leather for the seats. They entered into a collaboration with Chambers and the new entity, with a tannery in Tondiarpet, came into existence under the name of Brown & Co. This, however, did not prosper and when Simpson's withdrew, Chambers agreed to take over the assets of the company. It was renamed Chambers & Co and became one of the principal members of the British-dominated Madras Chamber of Commerce, then a powerful representative body for trade and manufacturing interests across the entire Presidency.

The chief cause of failure of Brown & Co had been Chambers' inability to make chrome tanning a commercial proposition and he became bitterly opposed to the process itself, preferring to revert to traditional methods. In the mid-1900s, the Government of Madras began pondering over ways and means to create an industrial appetite among Indians in the Presidency. It appointed Alfred Chatterton of the College of Engineering to

come up with schemes and he, after due study, suggested several alternatives, including pencil manufacture, soap making, aluminium processing and chrome tanning. In all of this he was strongly opposed by the Madras Chamber, which abhorred the idea of Indians taking to business. And within the Chamber, it was Chambers who stridently criticised Chatterton's attempts at chrome tanning. He was of the view that the process was unsuited to Indian conditions and predicted that Chatterton's scheme was doomed. But reality turned out otherwise.

It was a bitter pill, especially because Chatterton had enticed a key employee of Chambers to prove that chrome tanning was workable. The Government was delighted and Chatterton was knighted in recognition of several of his pioneering efforts. But it was Chambers who made money out of chrome tanning. He worked with a convert's zeal and, by 1913, set up the Chrome Leather Company (CLC) in 25 acres of land in Pallavaram, at a site that was described as possessing “a good elevation, and with excellent water.” It is pertinent to note that the area, which became Chromepet, does not have either attribute today. The old Chambers & Co became the Managing Agent for the CLC, its tannery in Tondiarpet having closed owing to an outbreak of malaria in that area.

World War I saw demand for Indian leather soar and Chambers prospered, with the CLC employing over 400 workers by 1916. A showroom for the Company's finished products was set up “on the Mount Road, facing Neill's statue and near the Madras Club.” Over 100 people laboured away in producing hand-made footwear. Exports were made to “South and East Africa, Abyssinia, Aden, the Persian Gulf, Mauritius, Burma, Ceylon and parts of the Far East.”

By the 1930s however, competition blunted CLC's edge, what with several British companies jumping into leather and many Indians being attracted to it as well. Nevertheless, CLC remained a name to contend with. George Chambers died on November 16, 1937. He had married three times, and it was his

last wife, Ida, and Roy Edwin, his son through his second wife, who inherited the business. The two did not see eye to eye and eventually it was Ida who ran CLC, leaving Roy Edwin to other pursuits, though he did not relinquish or sell his share in the business. Ida, by all accounts was a tough character, who stayed on in India post-Independence and managed CLC, seeing it through many labour troubles and other problems that plagued enterprises in the 1950s and 1960s. In this she was helped considerably by M Subbaraya Iyer, the famed lawyer, who was her advisor. When he won a tough labour case for her, he requested that his fee be given as donation to a pet project of his – the Vidya Mandir School. An entire wing was named after her in gratitude.

By 1965, Roy Edwin and Ida reached an agreement to sell CLC. The Company was purchased by A Nagappa Chettiar, leather baron extraordinary who did much to make Tamil Nadu a major in this sector. Ida Chambers bequeathed most of her share of the money to charity before dying in 1968 in a road accident. Nagappa Chettiar, in the meanwhile, made a success of the CLC, introducing leather boards out of cuttings and also developing leather washers. It appeared

(Continued on page 7)

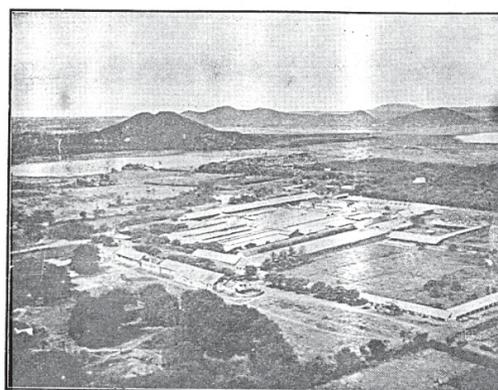
LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

— SRIRAM V

"CHROME"CO

FOR EVERYTHING IN

FINISHED LEATHERS & LEATHER GOODS.



AERIAL VIEW OF WORKS (18 ACRES).

Manufacturers of :

Box and Willow Sides, Glace Kids, Sole Leathers, Chamois, Fancy and Embossed Leathers, Etc.

Boots, Shoes, Handbags, Purses, Wallets, Belts, Suit Cases, Etc.

Ginning Washers, Belting, Cup Washers, Laces, Ram Rings, Etc.

THE CHROME LEATHER CO.,
CHROMEPET, P.O., S. INDIA.

... And one alive and preening

Like the legendary Phoenix, Chennai's iconic hotel, now called the Taj Connemara, has gone through as many transformations as the City itself.

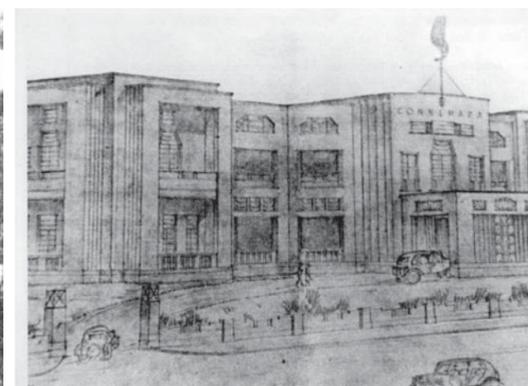
It started as a garden house built by John Binny, a surgeon attached to the Nawab of Wallajah's court. When Binny became the Sheriff in the early 19th Century, the Nawab gave him the land on which he built a suitably grand mansion. In subsequent years the house passed through different hands to become the Imperial Hotel, (1867-1886), the Albany (1886-1891) and finally the Hotel Connemara in 1891 when it was purchased by M/s Spencer & Co.

Lord Connemara was the Governor of Madras from 1886-1890 and has left his stamp and his name on other well-known landmarks of the City.

It's however Lady Connemara's spirit that walks the corridors of the hotel even after the long passage of time. As the second wife of the honorable Governor, she created a minor scandal by leaving the Governor's residence and taking rooms at the hotel then known as the Albany. One of the delightful aspects of the newly renovated hotel are a set of public spaces named after her — the Lady Connemara Bar and Lounge that together replenish the spirits and the romance of the past with style.



The Connemara Hotel main block before remodelling began in 1934.



Jackson and Barker's sketch of what the remodelled Connemara (1930s) was expected to look like when completed.

Tea-time at the Connemara again

As S. Muthiah has had the pleasure of recounting in the past; “It was not Oakshott representing the Spencer's who bought the property, but Oakshott himself. The land he bought from Triplicane Ruthnavaloo Moodelliar in April 1891 was 6 cawnies for 21 ½ grounds in extent, a bit less than 9 acres.” It was sold to Spencer's in 1913.

In between the war years, it became the leading establishment with separate quarters for Families and Bachelors, boasting of a Tennis Court and a well laid out garden where tea and light refreshments were served. The Art Deco style that was in vogue became a design feature of the Hotel that has been continued to

this day. There were variations when Geoffrey Bawa took over the renovation with the addition of a new residential wing in the style that he popularised as “Tropical Modernism”.

● by
Geeta Doctor

Sue Freeman, the British designer who has nurtured the hotel in the past, has created a charming medley of all these different aspects in her cool and elegant approach to the latest reinvention of the Connemara.

It's probably seen at its best in the Lady Connemara Lounge, an

oasis of sage greens and pale magnolia set in a drawing room that Lady Anna Maria Russell, 7th Duchess of Bedford, would have enjoyed. As the Menu card reminds the guest she was the one who felt the need to assuage what she called ‘that sinking feeling’ between lunch and dinner, by inventing a ritual called the “Afternoon Tea”.

It was also a time at the height of the Victorian era to display the *avant-garde* style of Darjeeling tea served in exquisite porcelain with a silver service, embroidered linens and, of course, a Butler to serve the tea cakes and crustless sandwiches.

It's not Lady Bedford who stares down at the modern-day guest who needs to satisfy his or

her “sinking feeling” between 3 pm and 5 pm at the Lady Connemara Lounge, but the Prince of Arcot, the old Nawab of Wallajah. What he makes of the salmon sandwiches, the scones, the jam and clotted cream is hard to say. Maybe he would thoroughly approve of the specially plucked and decanted brews of a single estate tea from Valparai, or the coffee from the Yanagundi estate in Coorg. For, more than anything else, the Nawab was someone who enjoyed sharing the good life with his guests.

As Ahmar Siddiqui the affable GM who stood by and watched the renovation of the Taj Connemara Hotel from the ground upwards through a long period of 22 months, confided, “It's been a great experience for me to have been a part of the history of this grand old hotel that is connected so intimately with the history of the City. It's something I will treasure for the rest of my life.”

The best little bird sanctuary

If you went to school in Chennai, chances are you have visited the Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, some 75 kilometres south of the city. As an eighth grader, I went there on an excursion. Oblivious to the birds in the distance, my friends and I sat in a circle, chattering away over a picnic lunch. That day trip did not make a birder of me but I now travel to remote areas to spot rare endemics. And each winter, when I visit the old hometown, I am eager for an annual rendezvous with my feathered friends in southern India's oldest bird sanctuary.

With the onset of monsoons in October, the compact 74-acre haven comes to life. Good rains fill up the seasonal lake at the heart of the sanctuary, almost submerging the mini-groves of *Barringtonia* trees that dot the lake bed. Only the crown branches don't go under. At least

a dozen species of waterbirds – cormorants, egrets, storks, darters and herons among them – will arrive to raise their families in these treetops. The fortress-like setting gives the birds privacy to breed, the “moat” is full of frogs, fish, and insects for ravenous chicks. Everything is lush and green.

● by
Vijaysree Venkatraman

This sets the stage for some great birding between November and March. Because space is tight in this colony, different species take up residence on the same treetop. Walking along the long tank bund, you can see the motley bunch of waterbirds in this rare, mixed rookery. Apart from this, there are close to a hundred different species of birds in this sanctuary, not



Painted Storks



Spoonbill.



Pelican.



Black-headed Ibis.

counting the migrants. Even bar-headed geese, which fly over the Himalaya to escape the bitter winters of Central Asia, have been spotted here.

Local farmers have always been good hosts to the nesting birds, trusty suppliers of organic fertiliser. Fledglings are known to eat more than their body-weight of food each day. After all this feeding, the birds, both parents and chicks, drop guano, right into the seasonal lake below. Farmers use the enriched water

to irrigate the adjoining paddy fields.

History records that, in the late 1700s, the villagers asked the Collector of Chengalpattu to give them a document assigning the area protected status. No shooting or snaring of birds. Perhaps, they needed to wave this piece of paper at Europeans who showed up for the hunting season. But there is a reason to believe that Vedanthangal has

(Continued on page 6)



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

1. Name the present CJI sworn in on October 3.
2. Which famous type of mango from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad Districts of Maharashtra got a Geographical Indication (GI) recently?
3. Which Nobel Prize has been jointly shared by Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad?
4. According to the 2018 Henley Index, which country has the most powerful passport with its holders enjoying visa-free access to 190 destinations?
5. Arkady Dvorkovich is the new president of which sporting body in which India has produced a five-time World Champion?
6. Name the maverick English artist, whose painting 'Girl with Balloon' self-destructed through a built-in shredder hidden in the frame after selling for \$1.4 million at an auction.
7. Google recently announced that it is shutting down which offering after seven years due to 'very low usage' and a software error?
8. Which Indian State has been named the world's first totally organic agriculture state?
9. Name the new word added to the Oxford Dictionary which refers to a society consisting of or governed by people characterised as idiots or a government formed of people considered stupid.
10. In which State capital is India's and Asia's first Dolphin Research Centre to come up soon?

* * *

11. Who has been the most famous resident of 75 (new 67) Thulasinga Perumal Kovil Street in Triplicane?
12. Which legendary filmmaker's family's house was at the place where the present Dominic Savio School is located in San Thomé?
13. *Parasakthi*, which saw the debut of Sivaji Ganesan, was made based on whose stage play?
14. In August 1777, Moinudeen Mahomed Abu Baker became the first to officially hold which post specific to his religion?
15. Which cricketer from Chennai has the distinction of scoring a century on his Test debut for India?
16. What is the surname of the English civil servant with the Christian names George Townsend who has a famous thoroughfare named after him in T. Nagar?
17. Which famous *sabha* was founded by Manni Thirumalachariar in 1900?
18. Which school in Mylapore, started in 1937 by V.N. Sharma and his German wife Ellen, was one of the city's first Montessori Schools?
19. What is the name of the auditorium in Kalakshetra that is built in the Kerala style?
20. Which big medical facility in that began functioning in 1961 Adyar was the brainchild of Dr. K.S. Sanjivi?

(Answers on page 8)

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.**

This month's book is *Revived Memories* by K. Subba Rao (Ganesh and Co. 1933). It is credited with being one of the earliest autobiographies of an Indian journalist. Starting his career as an educationist, Subba Rao later joined *The Hindu* and was also involved with the *Indian Social Reformer* as its Joint Editor. He then shifted to government administration by joining the Mysore Services. The book is a fascinating account of his life and interactions with several notable personalities of his times.

Subba Rao was born in Tanjore in the 1860s. His father, Krishna Rao, held several positions in the Government, starting as a Munshi in the Deputy Collector's Office in Tanjore and rising to become Sub-Magistrate of Vedaranyam. The family was originally from Coimbatore. In 1876, Subba Rao joined the Government College in Kumbakonam, then considered as the Cambridge of South India. He was, however, forced to discontinue his education following financial con-

Revived memories of a journalist

straints in the family thanks to his father being relegated to the position of a Taluk Sheristedar on the insistence of a rather unscrupulous Collector, H.S. Thomas.

Subba Rao notes that it was around this time that demand was being felt for the opening of Native High Schools across Southern India following the success of the one in Kumbakonam. On receiving several representations from his friends in Coimbatore, he moved there and started the Coimbatore Native High School in 1882. The school grew against all odds (including obstacles in obtaining recognition, primarily as the teachers, though dedicated, had not passed through the Training College), producing excellent results in a short span of time. Following its success, a similar school was established in Erode. While at Coimbatore, Subba Rao also started nurturing an interest he had long harboured, that of becoming a journalist. He started to contribute letters to *The Hindu* and after several rejections became regularly accepted.

Subba Rao moved to Madras in 1886 in search of a job that would earn him a steadier

income that would help the family finances, which had further plummeted following his father's summary dismissal from the services along with 18 others on the recommendations of the Board of Revenue for the Tanjore Remissions inquiry. He joined the offices of *The Hindu* following an interview with G. Subramania Aiyer, its founder and Editor who had been in occasional correspondence with him and was posted as its Madurai Correspondent. He arrived in Madurai just as the Government was in the midst of active damage control following its defeat in the famous Garstin Dacoity Case which had resulted in the acquittal of the Zamindar of Bodinayakanur, who had been named as chief accused. Subba Rao's work as an investigative reporter reporting on the confidential enquiry commission found acclaim with his employers and thus began a nearly decade long association.

Subba Rao was an active member of the Social Reform movement. In the book, he narrates three incidents of widow remarriage that he was closely involved with (the first one being that of G. Subramania Aiyer's daughter) in the face of

heavy social opposition. Along with a few others, he founded the *Indian Social Reformer*, a weekly devoted to moral and social reforms, and subsequently the Madras Social Reform Association.

After eight years with *The Hindu*, Subba Rao quit to join the Mysore Services. The shift in the profession came about thanks to, in his own words "a dismal financial horizon". G. Subramania Aiyer was, however, not too keen to let him go and even left the door open for his return until the time the Mysore Services had confirmed his appointment. There was, however, no looking back, but the association with *The Hindu* was renewed when, in 1924, he wrote a series of articles documenting his life and association with several public personalities, which form the basis for this book.

The book is a valuable documentation of public life and several notable incidents of the late 19th and early 20th century in the Madras Presidency. The short biographical accounts of the various people Subba Rao was in close contact with, such as Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer, G. Subramania Aiyer, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer (Dewan of Mysore), and Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar (Dewan of Baroda) do justice to the remarkable personalities they were, without coming across as being hagiographical.

In his Foreword to the book, the Rt Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri commends the book as being a "good specimen of its class" and makes a special mention of how Subba Rao has steered clear of making ugly disclosures and destroying reputations. A fine line of humour throughout the narrative adds value to this must-read book.

The best little bird sanctuary

(Continued from page 5)

been a haven for birds even before. Why else would they ask the Collector for that document? Was it the goodness of the people, or was it the guano that made them want to protect the nesting birds? It doesn't matter, because it has been a win-win situation for both birds and farmers all along.

Now, a national highway provides easy access to this once-sleepy village and traditions in the region appear to be changing. A study from the National Conservation Foundation indicates that the hunting of waterbirds has gone up in this district in recent times. Researchers reported that the meat from medium-sized waterbirds was sold in the area,

between 6 pm and 8 pm, to buyers who specifically sought wild fowl. The rest went to local restaurants and cheaper eateries near liquor shops.

Barring news of this disturbing development, you'll find all this information about the sanctuary, and more, in a slim book called *The Vedanthangal Water Sanctuary for Birds* written and illustrated by naturalist M. Krishnan. Issued in 1960 and priced at less than a rupee, it should have found a place in every school library. The beautiful prose and the precise details about the natural history of the place could have turned some students into birders. (Such awareness could have also kept children in the area from eating wild fowl later in life.) The book remains an ex-

cellent resource though it has no color photographs.

The keen-eyed can see fair-sized waterbirds from a distance. Don't let a lack of binoculars bother you, you can rent them just outside the sanctuary. There is a spotting scope at the watch tower inside the sanctuary. On the walls, there are painted pictures with descriptions, to help you identify birds. You don't even have to get there bright and early. Show up a good hour before the winter sunset. Take a leisurely stroll, look for some migrants or colourful locals like the copper-smith barbet, flamebacks, the Indian Roller, and wait for the big event of the day – waterbirds coming home to roost. This is not the bright-colored spectacle you will see in

some well-produced nature documentary, but it is something to experience.

On one of my trips, I saw an elderly local woman burst into spontaneous applause at the beauty of it all. With the orange-violet sky of dusk as the backdrop, the waterbirds made one last appearance before retiring for the night. There were pouch-mouthed pelicans, black-headed ibis, and spoon-bills that looked like they were making off with a chemistry lab spatula each. And my favorites, the painted storks with their roseate tuts. I saw them all, and for a few glorious moments, I did think to myself – what a wonderful world! – (Photos by G.V. Balasubramanian – an avid birder.)

From staid to daring

Growing up in Delhi in the post-Independence years, I learned to read my mother tongue, Tamil, only through magazines like *Ananda Vikatan* and *Kalki*, two popular weeklies that my mother subscribed to. Legendary Tamil writers like Kalki (Krishnamurthy), Lakshmi, R. Choodamani, and Jayakanthan had their novels serialised in these magazines, and I remember *Alai Osai*, *Ponniyin Selvan*, *Pareesukku Po* and other long stories that enjoyed avid readership. Some were social novels, some historical, but the language was uniformly gripping and – and more to the point – grammatically pure and correct.

Vikatan's cover always had a nice cartoon illustrating a joke; there was very little about cinema or film actors and actresses. Illustrations were often by the gifted 'Silpi', who created masterpiece reproductions of temple sculptures and intricate depictions of historical figures to match a story's narrative.

Half a century later, when I pick up current issues of these magazines, I am struck by the changes, in content, layout, choice of subjects and general get-up. If the publications of the 1950s had a staid and decorously called *Bharatiya nari* (Indian woman), or a conscientious, God-fearing middle-class man, today's feature a typical, fashion-conscious, daringly clad college girl leading a 'fast life'.

Is the media reflecting social

changes, or society being influenced by media depictions? It's a moot point. Strangely enough, alongside the 'progress' in terms of modernity and 'liberation' that the magazines reflect today, there is also evident, a more daring manifestation of sexism (which 'modernity' frowns upon).

The language, for one – grammar and adherence to lin-

in Tamil script). "Sooper" (again, written in Tamil letters, in place of what would have been 50 years ago, *Sari* (all right) or *Pramaadam* (super). Worlds like *naatla*, *veetla*, and *roadla*, which would have been *naattil*, *veettil* and *theruvil* originally, have taken on new, 'modern' inflections.

Appadi illanga (it is not like that), a film director says now,

● If Tamil publications of the 1950s had a staid and decorously clad *Bharatiya nari* (Indian woman), or a conscientious, God-fearing middle-class man on their covers, today's feature a typical, fashion-conscious, daringly clad college girl leading a 'fast' life. Is the media reflecting social changes, or society being influenced by media depictions? It's a moot point. Strangely enough, alongside the 'progress' in terms of modernity and 'liberation' that the magazines reflect today, there is also evident, a more daring manifestation of sexism, which 'modernity' frowns upon, says Sakuntala Narasimhan of an unbelievable metamorphosis.

guistic norms, go for a toss. Not just colloquialism, but downright hybrid 'masala mixtures', call it a textual equivalent of *chaat*-masala and *pani-puri* (not part of South Indian cuisine originally, but even wedding receptions offer these North Indian imports today, in the name of 'trendiness').

Here's a sampling of sentences from today's pages: "Okay vaa?" (Is it okay, written

in an interview, the way a lower class, semi-literate person would say it; that would have been, correctly, *Appadi illai*, in a magazine of yesteryear. *Paaraattitta* ought to be *paaraatti vittaal*. And so on. *Kondaaduranga* (they are celebrating) would have been previously *Kondaadugiraargal*. Partly, it is perhaps a dilution of Brahminical-literary styles, in favour of commonly spoken, caste-less phrases. Partly, it is also a reflection of the 'anglicisation' of urban lifestyles and speech. 'Creativity illai' (there is no creativity), one phrase says. Isn't there a word for creativity in Tamil?

Curiously, there is no 'Hindi-isation' or admixture, in tandem with the Anglicisation – whereas even ads for national entities like the Life Insurance Corporation, or multinationals, routinely use Hindi phrases like *aap ke liye* and *jawaab nahin* in their ads. Interesting! There's grist here, for political/social/North-South research...

Then the pictures – women in shorts, short skirts, knee-length boots, striking sexy poses, with hair left open and no *pottu* (bindi) on the cover – not done, just not done, in a 'family magazine' commanding a wide circulation (including South Indian readers settled in the north). Two generations ago, decent females did not leave their hair open, much less cut it, and being without a *bindi* was, well, considered sacrile-



Once upon a time...

gious and sinful for Hindu women other than widows; as for showing leg – only women of loose morals did.

The magazines would have promptly lost circulation and readership with such depictions, during my mother's time. Now, perhaps, these are the images that sell. Even *salwar-kameez* was not acceptable once (I used to wear *salwar-kameez* to play tennis, and that was supposed to be scandalous in the South, even during the late 1950s when I entered college.)

The recipe page offers *chaat* (unknown in the South, at one time) and pizza as 'special' treats. The titles and subtitles for features are 'In box' (written in Tamil script of course) and 'Visual corner'. 'TV corner' is the title of one section (my mother-in-law would not have understood the word corner). "Lights on" is the title for another section (on filmi gossip). English words proliferate. One article is on Beyonce (that's globalisation for you) with a picture that would have never been seen in these magazines half a century ago.

A recent issue of *Kumudam*, another popular weekly, has 'Women who smoke' as its lead story, with a young woman on the cover to match, with saree carefully pulled down to expose a breast.

The trend started perhaps three decades ago, with the rise

of writers like Sivasankari and 'Sujatha' (whose serialised fiction commanded a huge fan following and turned them into social icons). Their novels were gripping and were enjoyed for the plots' conception rather than literary merit. Nonetheless, the language still remained largely uncorrupted, and faithful to the South Indian ethos. That has changed dramatically, in the New Millennium.

There are still a few Tamil literary magazines, untouched by these trends, but they are by no means 'mainstream' or popular in the sense of wide readership. Which is perhaps true of other languages too (including English). Is that a good thing? Had one of today's issues of *Ananda Vikatan* been available when I was in school, trying to learn Tamil, I would have been confused by the hybridisation of the written word – part English, part colloquial, and part a genetically modified version of regional writing.

A requiem for something wholesome that is gone, or a hailing of something more in keeping with today's confused times? That brings us back, then, to that earlier question: Do publications reflect the times or mould them through what the older generation would call a 'corruption' of language, themes and presentation? (Courtesy: *RIND Survey*.)

CHENNAI HERITAGE

No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014

I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No.....) / I have just seen *Madras Musings* and would like to receive it hereafter.

● I/We enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs. 100 (Rupees One hundred) payable to **CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS**, as **subscription to *Madras Musings*** for the year 2018-19.

● As token of my support for the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that *Madras Musings* espouses, I send Chennai Heritage an additional Rs. (Rupees)
Please keep/put me on your mailing list.

Name :

Address:

All cheques to 'Chennai Heritage'. DD/Cheque should be sent by Speed Post only.

All that's left is a road and an area name

(Continued from page 4)

that his golden touch had worked at the CLC as well, but that was not to be. In 1972, India suffered a major credit crunch and export financing was withdrawn. The CLC suffered enormously as a consequence. Nagappa Chettiar's health too declined around the same time and the Company faced difficult times. The banks stepped in after prolonged negotiations in 1981.

This was the decade when Chromepet began developing fast as a residential and industrial area. The land on which

CLC stood became far more valuable than any promise its erstwhile leather business had held. In 1993, much of the shares of the Company were acquired by a private trust that was into education. It consequently took over the assets and began selling them piecemeal. The gateway and the compound walls of CLC stood for long and have now vanished as well. A warren of shops and factories has come up there. The thoroughfare leading to this maze is still CLC Works Road. That, and the name Chromepet, stand testimony to a pioneering leather enterprise.

Surprise TNPL winners

The 2018 Tamil Nadu Premier League threw a surprise when the unfancied Siechem Madurai Panthers beat the tournament favourites Dindigul Dragons in a near one-sided contest. The hero of the winners was opening batsman Arun Karthik who finished the game with a scintillating unbeaten 75. With this score, Karthik also emerged as the tournament's highest run-getter with an aggregate of 472 which included six half centuries.

The final played at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, was bowler-friendly despite what the commentators said before the start of the game that it was an easy track and would produce plenty of runs. Unhesitatingly, the Panthers on winning the toss sent the Dragons to bat first. The move clicked as the latter struggled for runs right from the start losing half their wickets for just 21.

Narayan Jagadeesan, who took over the Dragons' captaincy after Ravichandran Ashwin's departure for England to join the Indian team, alone

batted with confidence, hitting 51. Nevertheless, the Dragons were bowled out for just 117 with just one delivery left.

Panthers' right-arm seamer Abhishek Tanwar used the wicket and the conditions well claiming four for 30. His right-arm seam partner T.D. Lokesh Raj who was playing only his third TNPL game claimed three wickets for 31 runs. Leg spinner Varun Chakravarthy picked up two wickets for just nine runs off his four overs, one of which was a maiden over.

It was surprising that Dragons, who scored 203 for six in the first qualifier and dismissed Panthers for just 128, were bowled out cheaply. The Panthers, after their splendid show in the second qualifier, hit peak form just in time.

The Madurai team was in for a shock when it began chasing its small target losing three wickets for just two runs to left-arm spinner Silambarasan who took the new ball. All the three dismissed batsmen, failed to score. However, the reliable Karthik played with his head



The Siechem Madurai Panthers.

down before opening out skillfully as he hit four fours and four sixes facing 50 balls for his unbeaten 75. Shujit Chandran (38 not out off 49 deliveries) gave excellent support as the pair but on an unbroken 117-run partnership for the fourth wicket and carried Panthers safely home. Karthik signaled the win with a splendid off-driven six off paceman Mohammed.

● by A Special Correspondent

Karthik was duly named Player-of-the-Match and Player-of-the-Tournament and fully deserved the accolades for his splendid displays throughout this edition of TNPL. Tanwar's wicket tally in the tournament went to 15 following his splendid bowling in the final.

A cursory glance at Karthik's tournament statistics clearly shows the value of his presence at the top of the batting order. The Panthers triumphed whenever Karthik scored and this he did with cricketing precision which helped him amass 472

runs in tournament which included six half centuries.

The 32-year old wicket-keeper batsman who turns out for Assam in the Indian domestic cricketing tournament reserved his best for the qualifier game and the finals and propelled his team to success.

Karthik had been adept at turning games into his side's fortunes many times in the past. Coming to mind is his game for the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the 2011 Champions League game against the South Australian Redbacks. He initially had an IPL contract with Chennai Super Kings and was bought by RCB that season. That move paid off quite spectacularly in the Champions League later that year, when his last-ball six against South Australia took Royal Challengers to the semi-finals.

Originally a right-handed top-order batsman and occasional opener, Karthik began his first-class career with 149 on debut against Karnataka in 2008-09. He was part of a strong Tamil Nadu batting line up that season, scoring 344 runs in four games. Karthik began his main-

stream career in Sri Lanka, where he represented Radureliya Sports Club for one season. He was the leading run-scorer for his club, with 213 runs in nine games in the 50-over tournament.

Why was Karthik not under consideration of the Tamil Nadu team selection, compelled him to play for Assam. But he has since then been the Northeastern State team's batting mainstays. He enjoyed a great Ranji season for Tamil Nadu in 2009-10, scoring 573 Ranji runs at 53.19.

While Karthik played for Assam for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, he accumulated over 1,300 runs. He played for Kerala in the 2017-18 season and aggregated 332 runs. His performances in the just-concluded TNPL season bear testimony to the fact that Karthik is still a prolific run-getter. Tamil Nadu could reconsider its selection policy and induct Karthik into the team again as the State side badly needs some experience in the middle order. — (Courtesy: Straight Bat.)

Answers to Quiz

1. Ranjan Gogoi, 2. Alphonso, 3. Peace Prize, 4. Japan, 5. FIDE (Chess), 6. Banksy, 7. Google +, 8. Sikkim, 9. Idiocracy, 10. Patna.

11. Subramania Bharathi, 12. K. Subrahmanyam, 13. Pavalar Balasundaram, 14. Chief Kazi of Madras, 15. A.G. Milkha Singh, 16. Boag, 17. Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, 18. Children's Garden School, 19. Koothambalam, 20. Voluntary Health Services Hospital.

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations

