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MADRAS MUSINGS

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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City celebrates despite Govt. indifference

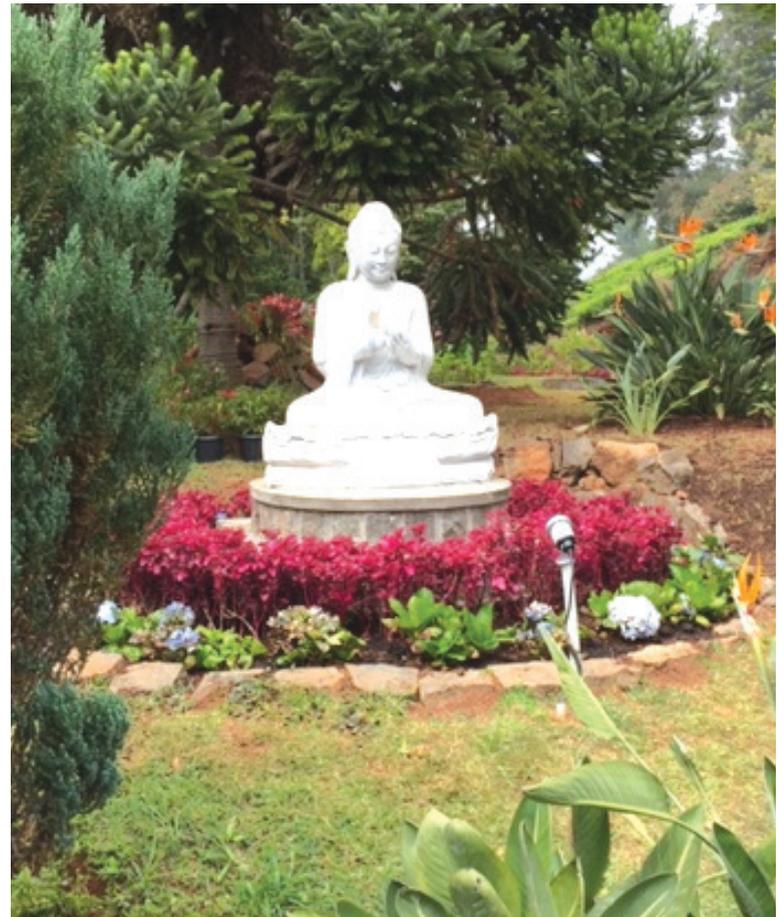
● by The Editor

The annual December Music Festival has been in progress in various pockets of the city during the next couple of weeks showcasing concerts of both classical music and dance. It is a niche event given the minuscule numbers that follow these arts, yet it has an inordinately high profile. The Season as we know it has been going on for over 92 years now. It is also one of the reasons as to why Chennai was given the creative city tag by UNESCO last year. A couple of years ago, *The New York Times* listed Chennai among 52 must-see cities of the world and cited the annual music and dance festival as one of the principal reasons for its inclusion. Yet, the Government remains completely indifferent to The Season, as it is referred to.

Cut to August when we have Madras Week celebrations. It is much smaller as compared to the arts season and is at present even more niche. But it has greater potential for it has in the seed of a citywide festival. All it takes is awareness that the city is celebration-worthy. This has been going on for over a decade now. It has over a 100 independent events each year. The unique aspect is that unlike the music/dance festival, this has no barrier to entry by way of knowledge of arts, finances, etc. Anything and everything that focuses on the city can be interpreted as a celebration. While it has a lesser profile as compared to the December celebrations, there is no doubt that it is here to stay. An allied event, of greater vintage is the Mylapore Festival that too has become an annual feature in the city's cultural calendar. This too has not merited any Government attention.

There is perhaps no other city of India that has two such festivals. Yet it is a mystery as to why there is such indifference to them in Government circles. Madras Week has been dubbed elitist. The cultural season is perhaps not consideration-worthy as it is increasingly associated with a certain community that is not a vote bank. We can, of course, keep building excuses for anything and everything that is a private initiative. But the point is that both these events are continuing to be held.

It is also necessary to point out here that neither the December Music Season nor Madras Week is really dependent on Government patronage. On the other hand, Government involvement can bring about a greater awareness among international audiences, infrastructural improvements, and the possibility of spreading the event to pockets where they



May there be peace on earth and goodwill unto all – my favourite greeting card this year, from Sunita and Ram Shahaney.

Not the happiest of nursing scenes

Florence Nightingale, the Lady of the Lamp, gave respectability to nursing and left her footprints on the sands of time. It was she who made nursing a valuable part of medicine. Every patient, after being under the surgeon's scalpel, is cared for on his or her road to recovery by nurses. What a noble profession!

In this age of fast diminishing social values and ethical standards, let us take a look at our nursing scene. Chennai, that was Madras, is home to a variety of 'nursing schools' where this segment of paramedical staff is trained. These function with the avowed objective of equipping the trainees with a range of professional skills to ameliorate the pain of the patients.

Over 20 nursing schools and 40 colleges in the city and outskirts offer 3-year diploma and 4-year degree courses in Nursing. In Tamil Nadu, the 16 government medical colleges and over 200 nursing colleges affiliated to Dr. MGR Medical

● by
T. Rajagopalan

University offer about 8000 seats every year. Some hospitals, including Apollo, MIOT and Madras Medical Mission, have their own nursing schools. M.Sc. (Nursing) courses are also available in institutions like Dr. MGR Medical University. These run for two years and the graduates work not only in hos-

pitals but in research settings as well. The P.G. degree holders are eligible to become Nursing Superintendents and Deans of Nursing Colleges. In addition, Ph.D. programmes are offered in a few institutions. In Tamil Nadu, about ten institutions are recognised as nodal centres for doctorate programmes. With all this, we still find a shortage of nurses everywhere.

While the majority of nurses in hospitals turn out to be good, a few get a poor rating from the patients and their attendants. The latter complain about the lack of language and communication skills on the part of nurses – this apart from professional ability to do tasks like administering an injection with care.

Undoubtedly, nurses are saddled with a lot of work, but it is in small matters, like speaking kind words and bolstering the confidence of patients, that real competence stands out. This is especially so when juvenile patients and the elderly are in the wards. This situation is allowed to drift from casual neglect to serious disrepair in some places.

Both doctors and nurses must infuse in patients a faith in recovery. This aspect of health-care deserves more attention, since medicines alone are not enough. In the current scenario, patients are often made to accept their lot with a spirit of stoic acquiescence.

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Madras Musings wishes all its readers 'A Very Happy New Year'.

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The City celebrates

(Continued from page 1)

do not happen. All of these can only bring benefits to the city. Imagine if a Global Investors Meet was held in conjunction with the December Festival or Madras Week! What a picture it will present to potential investors!

Tourism income can also go up, thereby building up another industry in our city. At present there is a lot of complacency as regards this industry in Government circles – Tamil Nadu has been topping the tourist footfall numbers in the entire

country for several years now, beating even the charmed golden triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. What is conveniently overlooked is that this is entirely due to medical tourism being included in the statistics. That this too is despite Government's lack of involvement is another matter altogether.

But if only we did take steps to present in international forums what we do on the cultural front, the numbers can go up even more. Sadly, nobody appears to be thinking in that direction. It is high time they did.

THE NURSING SCENE

(Continued from page 1)

Interestingly enough, the 'Nightingale Pledge' enjoins on the practitioners "to render nursing services with due respect for the dignity and rights of the people... with no distinction of caste, creed, or race." The alleviation of suffering forms an important part of the code of nursing ethics.

The unifying symbol for nurses globally is the 'White Heart Symbol of Nursing' launched in 1999 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the International Council of Nurses. It stresses "the caring, knowledge and humanity that infuse the work and spirit of nursing."

Often, not without reason, criticism comes from the medical field about the low ratio of nurses to patients. This is certainly a worrying aspect of healthcare in society. Ideally, this ratio must be 1:5 (for five beds, one nurse) and 1:3 (for three beds, one nurse) for teaching and non-teaching hospitals. Thus, in the case of a 100-bed teaching hospital, there must be 20 nurses (teaching hospitals are those attached to a medical college). The deviation from the norms is quite glaring because of the in-built loopholes in rules.

Another aspect which deserves attention is that with the number of kidney patients on the rise, the training of nurses for home dialysis is very poor. Technically called CAPD, or Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis, this area calls for greater funding for training of nurses. The rapidly expanding spheres of elderly care, newborn care, palliative care etc. need to occupy a significant place in the scheme of things.

Many doctors refer to the declining standards in nursing schools. A surgeon with ripe experience who has set up his own clinic in Chennai says, "I have to take classes every day" referring to medical procedures

to be adopted by nursing assistants. The attrition rate here does not alarm him much, since the nurses get a good grounding and also liberal pay and perks.

The students who opt for nursing courses hail mostly from the lower middle class strata in the southern States, especially Kerala. Here, traditional families send their children who complete the Plus-two or Higher Secondary course to nursing schools with the fond hope that after a few years they will earn enough for their marriage. (The dowry system is still entrenched in Kerala.) After getting the certificate 'Registered Nurse, Registered Midwife (or RNRM)', the products from nursing schools get jobs as Nursing Assistants in hospitals. Several of the schools are Church-sponsored and quite a large number of qualified nurses go abroad, where they are much in demand.

For the accreditation of corporate hospitals, the requirement demands qualified nurses for all cadres. This explains the hurried way in which several hospitals shift the wards, turning them into classrooms for offering theory instruction. The practical side is taken care of in the wards where the patients struggle to survive. I am reminded of the lines "Things are seldom what they seem/skim milk masquerades as cream." Ingenious indeed are the efforts taken by the corporate hospitals to impress visiting inspecting teams.

You find patients from other parts of India and even foreign countries coming in droves to some of the City's hospitals of repute. The foreign patients find the treatment here quite good and also cost-effective. The packages offered to them include not only the hospital charges but convalescence in nearby tourist resorts. This is medical tourism with a vengeance! But how about the average patient?

Last mile connectivity

This is a phrase that is much in use these days. *The Man from Madras Musings* notes that it is employed in just about any context – from Metro rail to the capability of a deliveryman in reaching a parcel to the destination where it is intended. MMM is, however, of simpler stock and thinks of last mile connectivity each time he is invited to make a presentation.

MMM readily accepts these requests. He likes being on stage and speaking from there. It is also the one place where his good lady, also known as She Who Must Be Obeyed, allows him to exercise his right to freedom of speech. And he does prepare for these. But all the while, even as he goes about collecting the necessary photographs, audio and video files, he does have several doubts at the back of his head, and all of these have to do with last mile connectivity – namely will his laptop communicate with the overhead projector at the venue? And this is something that MMM has come to realise over the years has no one answer. It may happen; on the other hand it may not. It is all the luck of the draw.

vary – from a vintage telephone directory to a brick. After all this, the image on screen will still be at an angle to the screen itself, with considerable parts of it spilling on to the wall behind, thereby giving viewers a three-dimensional effect.

Lastly, the projector has to exhibit its venerable age by always being coated and covered in dust. This, in MMM's view, contributes to much of the problem but not in the opinion of the technician. He loves the dust, perhaps as a Biblical reminder that that is what we will all end up as. But this has an unfortunate side effect – the colours of the presentation get all distorted. What MMM planned out as a pleasing pastel pink becomes a garish magenta and all greens appear as yellow while white does not show up at all. But try explaining that to the technician.

MMM recently reached a venue to deliver a presentation and found the organiser wringing his hands. Apparently the screen for MMM's presentation had not yet arrived. MMM was delighted. Here he was, all prepared for a battle with the projector when even the mother of all equipment had

Sunday best and leaves early for the venues. They need to be there in time to get the best seats. This is the day they have been looking forward to for weeks. It would be too bad if they arrived late and found all the chairs occupied.

Once at the venue, they all make a beeline for the canteen and order just about every South Indian delicacy they find. And having feasted, they move into the main auditorium, enjoy the air-conditioned atmosphere for a brief while, with free music to boot, and leave. Their stomach is their God, as a great humorist once wrote, and they sacrifice burnt offerings to it. The music is quite incidental to this gastronomic experience. Several in fact give the performances a complete miss, the AC notwithstanding, and go home to sleep it off. A few don't even know that there is a music festival going on.

Among the favoured venues is the Music Academy. With ample parking space, a large canteen and a central location, this is where the worshippers of food gather each afternoon in large num-

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Much depends on the so-called technician at the site. This is generally a negative-minded individual who is of the view that his (and MMM is yet to meet a female at this job) projection equipment is of the best and failure, if any, to communicate rests solely with the laptop being brought along. Too often, these technicians know only how to switch on the projector and if things do not work at first click, switch off and switch on the projector again, before throwing in the towel. And then it is all left to MMM, who apart from praying fervently, gets on with all the twiddling, sometimes suffering nasty electric and other shocks in the process. Fortunately it all comes out fine at the end, but only after some plugging and, praying.

Coming down to first principles, have you ever seen a connector to the projector that is not held together by scotch tape? MMM has seen none. It is his view that the moment a projector is bought, the technician jumps on the connecting lead and having cracked it, proceeds to paste it together with tape. It must be a Masonic right of sorts, or it could be a requirement of the Projector Operators' Guild. The second requirement is that the projector always has to be propped up with something and this can

not come. MMM was all set for a presentation sans modern aids when the screen made its grand arrival. It was MMM's turn to wring his hands, but fortunately all went well, not however before some baulking on the part of the technician, complete with a taped up lead.

The food that's music

The Man from Madras Musings has heard it being said that a truly great art has to be multidimensional, appealing to different people at various levels. In that respect, nothing can beat Carnatic Music from MMM's point of view, for, apart from catching hold of its aficionados (MMM has heard this pronounced as *afficcindo*) via their heart, ears and minds, it also attracts people through their stomachs. This latter aspect, in MMM's point of view is something that has not been given the attention it deserves.

Come December, so MMM is given to understand, a festive atmosphere prevails in Sowcarpet and other areas where our brethren from the northern parts of our country reside. The moment they find the concert schedules published in *The Hindu's* 1st of December supplement, they begin planning their visits to the various *sabhas*. Dates are planned weeks in advance and on that particular day, everyone gets ready in his or her

bers. And this year, what with Silken Father being the caterer of choice at this location, the crowds were even larger. MMM who is a fixture at the Academy was given to understand by Silken Father himself, that he is under considerable pressure to prepare this dish or that by these regulars. In fact, said Silken Father to MMM in a burst of pride, some of these gourmands formed a social media group in advance, invited Silken Father to be a part of it and uploaded their favourite menus on it.

Happy New Year

Yet another year has gone by. Each time a new calendar comes along, *The Man from Madras Musings* wonders as to whether he would be able to keep this column going for another set of 12 months. And then he reflects, that as long as Chennai remains what it is there should be no dearth of subjects. And so, on behalf of the Chief, the Special Correspondent, the resident Printer's Devil and, of course, the despatch section, the printing and page layout departments and everyone else, MMM wishes you all a great 2019. Keep laughing and that should see you through.

–MMM

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



Indian English of two kinds

Hariharan's letter in (MM, 15th December) has prompted me to share some of my thoughts based on my experience.

A respected friend of mine, when I was teaching in Loyola College, was Michael Vivian Joseph, who taught English Language and Literature. Michael and I used to spend our free time discussing 'teaching'. As a doctoral-degree holder from the Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore) in the science (more than the art) of English-language teaching, Michael was different from others.

According to Michael, we have two kinds of English speakers in India: (1) those who speak 'babu' English, (2) those who speak 'butler' English. The babu-English speakers always revel in flamboyance in word choices and sentence constructions. Their conviction is that the more opulent the language is, his/her language proficiency is more amply displayed. In short, babu-English speakers preferentially choose less commonly used words and instinctively string together long, winding sentences. Many a time they liberally use archaic words to verbally ambush the listener. Their principal interest is to show-off their language command, rather than make others understand by using simple, easily understood, and formally acceptable words. Butler-English speakers stay at the other end of the spectrum. As Michael's description goes, their sentences will mostly be structurally incomplete: a few words, mostly nouns; verbs usually absent. Although fragmented, the listener will usually get the speaker's intended message. Michael used to tell me that if we were to compare the two genres of people, as a language scientist he will rate the latter superior far superior! Hariharan's comment relaying the words of his American friend reminded me of these.

Once, it was a get-together arranged for and by the academic staff of Loyola College, towards the end of an academic year. The Academic-Staff Association President had invited a

recently retired Vice-Chancellor (who had the extraordinary reputation of being the Vice Chancellor (VC) for different Tamil Nadu universities, in succession; a VC in high demand) as the speaker. Michael, who did not know of him, and I were there. I whispered into Michael's ears that the speaker was famous for his quotations in his 'eloquent' speeches.

The speaker spoke for close to 45 minutes in a monotonous voice, offering plentiful quotations from Shakespeare and Milton on the one hand and Kampan and Tiruvalluvar on the other, embedded with several unheard-of words with Greco-Latin roots. Many of our senior colleagues sitting in the front row, of an age with the speaker, enthusiastically applauded at the end of every long-winded sentence the speaker spoke.

When Michael and I were at the dinner table after the event, I asked Michael in a discrete voice, "How did you find the 'speech'? I saw you busy scribbling in your notepad." A smiling Michael said, "I was counting the sentences he spoke. Overall, he spoke 24. Of the 24, two were his own. The rest were quotations! His own sentences were, 'thank you for inviting me' said at the start and 'thanks for your patient listening' said at the end." Michael added, "I am left wondering what his (emphasis, 'his') message was today, given that the speech included recitation of sentences from others!"

We have been indoctrinated (by who? by our parents? teachers?? media???) with the knack of making everything complex, including English-language use.

A sidebar: I have used the term 'genre' earlier. Hence the following. I am unable to accept the way this word, genre (a delightful French word adopted into English, meaning 'kind, type') is said by many programme jockeys and others of the celluloid world, especially in Madras. They say this term sounding 'jaan-er', which is awkward and jarring. What worries me is that this unacceptable way of saying this word

CMDA's re-classification of land use

The Chennai Metropolitan Development Corporation Authority [CMDA] from time to time issues re-classification notifications based on the requests from applicants, who seek re-classification of land use from primary residential to commercial, institutional to commercial, agriculture to commercial and so on and so forth.

While the CMDA claims that it follows a set of rules, like registering such requests, scrutinising the same, publishing the reclassification requests in the newspapers and seeking responses from the general public, examining such responses/objections based on their merits, officials inspecting sites personally and checking the relevant papers, such as ownership document, patta etc., and taking into account the suitability of site, accessibility, compatibility with the adjoining developments, impact on the environment in respect of the above, even those who reside close to the sites which undergo such re-classification, are unaware of the changes in the absence of wide publicity, which is a must to elicit the public opinion. As a result, the move to re-classify the land use often goes unnoticed or draws no public comment. Only when the builder starts construction activity, does the neighbour or the public come to know and by that time, their opinion makes no meaning.

Re-classification of land use in any area, more particularly in a residential area, will draw flak because such a move causes inconveniences of all kind. Furthermore, the re-classification, from one zone to another, also has to reckon with the availability of infrastructure. For example, if a residential area is re-classified as commercial or any other land use, it cannot be done in the normal course, as in a residential area the availability of infrastructure/public utilities is very limited. Further, the impact of change on the environment will be very significant.

If the CMDA's re-classification has not evoked any public opinion thus far, it is mainly because of poor dissemination of information. The public will definitely react if they come to know of the change in the land use. In order to ensure total transparency, the CMDA, besides inserting advertisements in the leading, well-read dailies, must put up a huge board at the site which is set to undergo re-classification, and seek the views of the neighbourhood people, because it is they who will bear the brunt once the area is re-classified. Since the CMDA charges the applicant towards the cost of charges towards the publication of the notification, it can as well put up the board and debit the cost to him. In view of the fact that putting up the board at the site will be more meaningful, as it will elicit the attention of the neighbourhood community, the CMDA should dispense with the newspaper advertisement.

Furthermore, per se, the re-classification from one zone to another, more particularly residential to any other zones, should not be entertained in view of the huge impact on the environment and non-availability of the infrastructure. The re-classification of land was thought of when development regulations were not formed. Now that the CMDA has clear-cut development regulations, there is no need for re-classification of land use, more so in residential areas.

In T'Nagar, the re-classification of land use has become such a quiet affair that no one knows how the residential area turns into commercial overnight. Moreover, it is unwise to categorise one or two houses in a street having a row of houses/residential complexes in view of the impact on the inmates.

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repeatedly will make it appear as the correct pronunciation for those guided by the TV and radio! The website '<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/genre>' has a practical pronunciation demonstration of this term. I will hope that the radio and TV jockeys and other big wigs of cinema world would soon pick it up. Unfortunate it is that even some of the leading Carnatic-Music singers, who use this word in their speeches say this word as jaan-er. This word requires a subtle sound of 'dj' at the start, somewhat similar in sound to 'j' in our mother tongue and the end segment 'nre' needs to be said as 'n^{er}' in a soft manner. Of course, if someone would tell me that we do not know how to say j and confuse it with ஜ, ஞ, then better we start practising our spoken Tamizh lessons from Class 1, right earnest.

My plea is that if we are passionate about a word, and want to use it, then we need to use it correctly and say it correctly. This is not impossible, since the Google Sarasvati has all of this!!

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Property Tax mess

The write-up on Property Tax revision (MM, December 16th) is more exhaustive than one could expect. Kudos to the writer.

One thing is clear. The Greater Chennai Corporation is cleverly flouting the Tamil Nadu Government's directive, right or populist, that the increase in the tax should not be more than 50 per cent for residential buildings and not more than 100 per cent for non-residential properties. The cap should be on the increase in Property Tax, but not on the parameters used in calculating the new tax, as the Corporation is doing. The government announcement has been clearly carried in newspaper reports of July 24th. Going by the numerous letters in the media, it can be seen that the directive has been followed more in the breach than in observance.

I know a case, where the property tax on a 16-year-old, 627 sq.ft., 2nd floor residential flat in West Mambalam (ward 135) has been increased from Rs.512 per half-year to a whopping Rs.4,585. In the revision notice, the flat has been quietly classified as non-residential, though in the Self-declaration Form it was correctly stated as residential, as it has always been a residential flat. An appeal has been made to the designated authority but it has not even been acknowledged. Adding fuel to the fire, Metrowater department is also jacking up its charges based on the jump in Property Tax.

I appeal to the Government to check whether the Chennai Corporation is following its directive correctly in letter and spirit or not, and announce the finding openly. Chennai Corporation may be funds-starved, but in fairness its actions should be people-friendly and not extortionist.

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West Mambalam Chennai 600 033

Cowshed sabha of VM Street

The Music Season would have wound down by the time this story appears in print, but it is still a tale worth recounting. Today, a Sabha to us is invariably a formal auditorium, with proper seating, a stage, a sound system (whatever be its merits), and in most cases, an air-conditioned interior. But this was not the way Carnatic Music was heard in the past. In the old days, much of the music was in open-air locations – temples, pandals, parks; closed-door venues were school buildings. But even then, a concert in a cowshed was unusual and yet one flourished, in Triplicane.

In his *Memoirs of a Mediocore Man*, S.Y. Krishnaswami, ICS, writes of the Triplicane Sangeetha Sabha, which functioned from Venkatachala Mudali Street. The Valadi Brothers, owners of Valadi Stores in Triplicane, ran it. SYK noted that profit was the main motive and, “The premises was a cowshed of sorts, and cleaned for the occasion, not very scrupulously. Everyone sat on the floor, and as the concert proceeded, the first and second class members got mixed up and the dividing rope did a disappearing trick.” It was in these uncongenial surroundings that SYK first heard legends such as Palladam Sanjeeva Rao, Veena Seshanna and the Harikatha exponent Panchapakasa Sastrigal who, in SYK’s view, was “unmatched for erudition, wit, and the short and sweet musical interludes. He had a special affinity for the *raga* Senjurutti and his rendering of Ramayana *slokas* in that *raga* was an exquisite experience of word-tune-emotion unity.”

This was also where C Saraswati Bai, the first non-Devadasi woman to take to public performances, gave many *Kathakalakshepam* recitals. SYK makes note of this in his memoirs – “and Saraswati Bai, who was at one time the rage of *rasikas*, not merely because she was a good artist, but also because she was a woman, and her performances were attended by many old gentlemen who pretended to be interested only in the art.”

But that was not all. During “season,” which then did not mean December but sometime in July, just after the High Court reopened post-summer, the Valadi Brothers arranged special concerts at the historic *Gokhale Hall* on Armenian Street. They featured “eminent artists with eminent accompanists, the

artists being Chembai, Nayana Pillay and Sanjeeva Rao, and the accompanists Govindaswamy Pillay on the violin, Alaganambi on the *midangam*, Dakshinamurthy Pillay on the *kanjira*, Umayalpuram Sundaram Iyer on the *ghatam* and now and then Seetharama Iyer on the *mohrsing*.” All very laudable indeed but a further reading of SYK gives us some interesting

emerged from the tuning chamber, somehow order came to be restored and when the concert commenced, there was a hushed expectation, which was always rewarded.” It was at *Gokhale Hall* that the brothers introduced Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavata to Madras audiences. This was a time when the powerful trio of Malaikottai Govindaswami Pillai (violin), Kumbhakonam

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

– SRIRAM V

details about the Valadi Brothers’ *modus operandi*.

The duo “always sold more tickets than the Hall could accommodate and quietly disappeared before the concert began. There was serious in-fighting among the audience for sitting space, but when the artists

Azhagianambi Pillai (*mridangam*) and Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai (*kanjira*) had fallen out with their regular singer – Kanchipuram Naina Pillai. They then decided to prop up Chembai, a young and upcoming artist. The Valadi Brothers printed handbills and drummed up enough



interest for a record attendance at *Gokhale Hall*. On the day of the concert they did their usual disappearing act. Most members of the audience could not get in, but fortunately Chembai’s voice could be heard in the street. The doors were thrown up, Armenian Street was blocked, and the audience heard him spellbound. A new star was born.

It was however at the cowshed that the Brothers conducted much of their regular concerts. Several years later, R Venkataramana Row, C Saraswati Bai’s nephew, recalled them with gratitude for the support they had given his aunt in her early years. The Valadi Stores was into the selling of cloth – *dhotis* and *sarees*. It is not clear as to when the business came into existence

and when it folded up. For that matter the date of demise of the Triplicane Sangeetha Sabha.

I went down Venkatachala Mudali (VM) Street, which is a long thoroughfare stretching from Triplicane to Mylapore in search of a possible cowshed in which the Triplicane Sangeetha Sabha could have functioned. I saw plenty of cows, especially in the Triplicane end of the street but there were no cowsheds. Old-timers directed me to a huge barn of a building at beginning of this street but that had just been demolished. Perhaps this was Triplicane Sangeetha Sabha, where amid haystacks and cattle, the greatest of artistes performed and an enthusiastic audience gathered to listen.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Tamil theatre and traditional puppetry get more space at the 2019 edition of the Sundaram Finance Mylapore Festival (January 10th-13th).

Two short plays and one full-length play by Augusto will be staged in the open air at the main Sannidhi Street stage area of Sri Kapali Temple.

The two short plays are *Love Pannungo Sir* by writer Jayakanthan and *Bimbam* by R. Chudamani. Komal Dharini has curated the plays.

Mylapore Festival time again

While the first will be staged on January 10th and the second on January 11th evening, both will be staged again on January 12th (Saturday) evening, back to back.

Later, on January 12th evening, Augusto’s *Nagammal Padasalai*, which runs for 90 minutes, will be staged – a play which



at this space – on January 10th and 11th evenings.

This Kanniyakumari District troupe follows a hoary tradition – where all its artistes juggle the puppets as well as speak the dialogues and sing simultaneously.

“Five of us handle over 30 different characters in one production and each show can be done in one hour, though we traditionally stage it over many hours at night,” says Muthuchandran, who claims to be a sixth generation puppeteer, tracing the tradition to Marathi artistes who came to Tanjore and then dispersed.

One January 10th, the troupe stages *Harischandra* and on January 11th, *Sundara Kandam* extracts from both will run for about 90 minutes.

The 2019 festival will also have much to offer children – from contests in *dayakattam* and *palankuzhi*, to craft workshops in the park, a chess tourney at Mylapore Club and a tour of Sri Kapali temple to see the traditional games sculpted into the stones and pillars there (a *Kreedam* event).

(Continued on page 8)

Mahadevan – and Tamil-Brahmi

(Continued from last fortnight)

It was the discovery of an extremely important Tamil-Brahmi inscription at Jambai, near Tirukkoilur, that revealed Mahadevan’s determination to get at the truth of a controversy that surrounded this discovery. The Jambai inscription was important because it proved that the “Satiyaputo” mentioned by Emperor Asoka in one of his rock edicts was none other than the Atiyaman dynasty, which ruled from Tagadur, modern Dharmapuri.

Dr. Rajagopal narrated what happened in October 198. He had asked K. Selvaraj, one of his students in epigraphy, to climb the hill at Jambai and read the Chola inscription found there. On the way to the hill-top, Selvaraj found two potsherds with Tamil-Brahmi scripts on them. He collected the potsherds. When he was climbing the hill further, he found a Tamil-Brahmi inscription engraved on a boulder

behind two natural caverns. After Selvaraj came down from the hill, he sent a telegram about his find to Dr. Rajagopal, who was then based in Madurai in the Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department. Dr. Rajagopal asked Selvaraj to inform Dr. R. Nagaswamy, then Director, Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department, about the discovery. When informed, Dr. Nagaswamy was delighted to

duman Anci of the Sangam age. The controversy snowballed.

In his foreword to Dr. Nagaswamy’s book *Roman Karur*, Mahadevan wrote elaborately about what happened. Here is Mahadevan’s account:

“Dr. Nagaswamy had a very similar experience years later when he was looking at the Jambai record of Atiyaman Neduman Anci, one of the most celebrated

Continuing T.S. Subramaniam’s tribute to the great scholar Irvatham Mahadevan.

hear about it. He travelled to Jambai and read the Tamil-Brahmi inscription discovered by Selvaraj. The inscription spoke about how Satiyaputo Atiyaman Neduman Anji donated the pelli, that is, the bed there, for the Jaina monks to take rest.

According to Dr. Rajagopal, doubts were soon raised about the genuineness of the discovery. The doubting Thomases alleged that the inscription was “too neat” to belong to Atiyaman Ne-

heroes of the Sangam Age, and a contemporary of the Irumborai rulers of the Pugalur inscriptions. I can even now recall vividly his excited voice over the telephone one early morning in October 1981 informing me about the telegram received from Selvaraj, his student, announcing the discovery of a Tamil Brahmi inscription at Jambai near Tirukkoyilur in South Arcot District. As Dr. Nagaswamy was rushing to the site, I wished him god speed and

remarked jocularly that he might have stumbled on an Asokan Rock Edict. As it turned out, I was not too far off the mark. Dr. Nagaswamy did discover the title ‘Satiyaputo’ at Jambai known earlier from the second Rock Edict of Asoka. This finding clinched once for all the identification of ‘Satiyaputo’ with the Atiyamans of the Tamil Country. “There can hardly be any doubt that the Jambai record of Atiyaman Neduman Anci read by Dr. Nagaswamy is one of the most important epigraphical discoveries in Tamil Nadu and ranks with those of the Chera inscriptions at Pugalur and Nedunjelayan’s inscriptions at Mangulam, all belonging to the Sangam Age. I was then working in the Indian Express. I invited Nagaswamy to contribute two articles explaining the significance of the discovery, one in English to be published in all the editions of the Indian Express and the other in Tamil, *Dinamani*. One would have thought that such a major discovery would have been hailed by epigraphists. That is not what happened.

“A whispering campaign through foot notes citing footnotes was set afoot casting doubts on the ‘authenticity’ of the Jambai inscription. How could a Sanskrit expression like Satiyaputo occur in a Tamil-Brahmi record? And why is the dental ‘n’ used instead of the correct alveolar ‘n’ in the inscription?”

“Neither objections can stand scrutiny. Apart from the well-known occurrences of numerous Prakrit loan-words in the Tamil-Brahmi cave inscriptions discovered earlier (and published by me in the *Corpus of the Tamil-Brahmi Inscriptions* in 1966 in a volume edited by Dr. Nagaswamy), we now have the Prakrit grammatical form *Utayana-sa* occurring in the newly-discovered *Mettupatti* inscription and a similar expression *Peruvaluti-sa* occurring in one of the bi-lingual coin legends on an Early Pandyan coin. As regards the second



Mahadevan in quest of Tamil-Brahmi script at Jambai.

objection, Tamil epigraphists know only too well that the use of the dental for the alveolar ‘n’ is one of the commonest errors in Tamil inscriptions. The examples are too numerous to need citation.

“I became so concerned with these unfair criticisms that I decided to visit the site once again for more detailed investigations. With the co-operation of the District Collector of South Arcot, I convened a meeting at Jambai on 14th December 1991, attended by the Tahsildar, the village revenue officials and some prominent citizens. The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology was represented by Thiru Kulandaivelan. (Dr. M.D. Sampath of the ASI, Epigraphy Branch, was to have attended, but got held up in Delhi). At this meeting, Appavu, the retired Talayari of the village said that he took Selvaraj to see the inscription in 1981. Appavu had known the inscription since his boyhood as he used to rest in the cavern when grazing his cattle nearby. Two other villagers also corroborated the testimony and stated that they had also often visited the cavern with the inscription. All the three volunteered to make sworn affidavits duly attested by the Revenue Officials.

“And then the clinching evidence turned up. A Senior PWD Engineer who was present on the occasion, made arrangements to remove the top-soil from the two caverns situated opposite to each other. The cavern opposite with one with the inscription was found to have now rockbeds, a large broad one near the entrance and a smaller one in the middle of the cavern. The existence of the rock beds proved Jambai’s association with the Jambai caverns. This discovery, I note, has given the final quietus to an avoidable controversy.”

As Dr. Rajagopal said, Mahadevan was a scholar who aimed at the truth and perfection in whatever he did. (Concluded)

Noltie brings Cleghorn ‘home’

Till January 30: *Forests and Gardens of South India: The Cleghorn Collection of Botanical Drawings* – an exhibition at DakshinaChitra in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

The exhibition contains reproductions of 54 watercolour drawings in the collection of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The text and captions are by Dr. Henry Noltie, who curated the first showing of the drawings in Edinburgh in 2010. From 1986 to 2017, Henry Noltie worked at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as a curator and taxonomist. He is now a Research Associate there. For 14 years he worked on the *Flora of Bhutan* project, of which he wrote two of the volumes.

The last of Noltie’s Indian monographs consist of three volumes on the collections of Hugh Cleghorn (1820–1895), a pioneering Forest Conservator, the source of one of the largest groups of botanical drawings and many important books in the RBGE collection.



This exhibition was first shown in 2010 at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), Scotland, where the original drawings are one of the treasures of the library. The drawings were commissioned from several Indian artists by Hugh Cleghorn (1820–1895), the first Conservator of Forests

for the Madras Presidency. The exhibition is devoted to drawings from the periods 1845–7 and 1852–9. The title is taken from a book that Cleghorn published in London in 1861 and reflects the two major sources of his botanical subjects and interests.

Quizzin'
with
Ram'nan

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

1. Name India's first locomotive-less train that crossed the 180 km/ph speed limit during a test run on December 2nd.
2. Name the Croatian footballer who won the coveted 'Ballon D'Or' for 2018 to break the 10-year sequence set by Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
3. In a deal worth Rs. 31,700 crore, with whom has GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) decided to merge?
4. Name India's first privately built satellite that was launched by the Elon Musk company SpaceX recently.
5. Which film personality tops the annual Forbes India 2018 Celebrity 100 list with a net worth of Rs. 253.25 crore?
6. Which airlines has become the first Indian carrier to have 200 aircraft in its fleet?
7. According to the World Bank, India has retained its position as the world's top recipient of remittances in 2018, with its diaspora sending back how much money?
8. Where will India's first underwater museum be opened in the decommissioned INS *Cuddalore*?
9. In which State is the Kaiga Power Station-1 that recently created a world record for the longest uninterrupted operation (941 days)?
10. What is the Home Ministry's new Twitter account to create awareness about cybercrimes, and normal precautions to be taken, called?

* * *

11. Where in the State will the country's first music museum be set up with assistance from the Central Government?
12. Name the fencer from the State who won the gold in sabre event at the Commonwealth Championships in Australia recently.
13. Which book has won S. Ramakrishnan the Sahitya Akademi award for 2018?
14. Name the famed agriculturist, credited with documenting and protecting more than 170 paddy varieties, who passed away recently.
15. What is the new 24-hour toll free helpline number for women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment?
16. Who recently received the "Best Woman Parliamentarian - Raja Sabha" award from by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu?
17. Name the 1980 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre who has become the new RBI Governor.
18. What is the present name of the private botanical garden and fernery created by A. Arumugam Mudaliar, which he handed over to the Corporation in 1899?
19. Name the structure, built in early 1880s at one end of the Red Hills lake, that is a principal conduit of water supply to Madras.
20. In Pitt's map of 1709, which streets were called Washers' Street and Weavers' Street?

(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.

The 106th session of the Indian Science Congress, the country's premier conclave of science was held between 3rd and 7th January 2019 at the Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar. The Indian Science Congress Association, Kolkata, which organises this annual convention has a Madras connect to its founding, for one of its founders J.L. Simonsen, was a distinguished Professor of Chemistry at the Presidency College. Commemorating this connect, the book featured in this issue is the Madras Handbook, published in 1922 on the occasion of the session held in Madras that year.

The idea for forming an association for the advancement of science in India on the lines of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was brought about by Prof. J.L. Simonsen and Prof. MacMahon of the Canning College around 1911 or so. The main objects were to provide a forum for the

Introducing Madras to the scientists

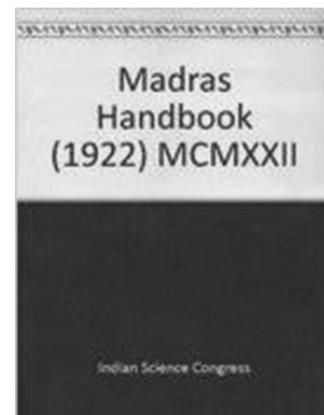
interaction between scientists across the country, paving the way for a more coordinated effort in scientific research and to give a more systematic direction to scientific enquiry. Scientific research and studies in India until that point in time were solely under the domain of the Asiatic Society. In fact, the first meeting of the Science Congress was held in Kolkata under its auspices and in its building in 1914, coinciding with the centenary of the Indian Museum.

The Science Congress came to Madras in 1922 for its ninth session and was held between January 30th and February 2nd. C.S. Middlemiss, former Director of the Geological Survey of India, was elected its President. It marked a return to the city after seven years, for the second session was held here in 1915. A handbook "to provide members with such information as to the City and Presidency of Madras and the scientific work that is being carried on there" was prepared on the occasion. It was edited by Clive Newcomb, the Chemical Examiner to the Government of Madras.

The book is divided into

seventeen chapters covering a wide range of topics, starting with a brief history of Madras by Henry Dodwell, the Curator of the Madras Records Office. The other chapters include a sketch of Fort St George by the Rev C de la Bere, the Garrison Chaplain, a note on the Madras City Waterworks by one of its key personalities, J.W. Madeley and a brief history of the Madras Corporation by J.C. Molony.

Of particular interest are the chapters on the city's premier research laboratory, The King Institute of Preventive Medicine, by its Director, Major John Cunningham, and the Biological Work in Madras. The King Institute, named after Colonel King, late Sanitary Commissioner, was founded in 1903 as a lymph depot for the supply of vaccine lymph to the Madras Presidency and grew to become one of the largest Provincial laboratories in the country, supplying over two million doses of the lymph vaccine annually. Its Microbiological Section was responsible for the clinical diagnosis of a bacteriological nature required by various medical institutions in the Presidency. It served as the headquarters of



the Kala-Azar Commission in Madras in 1912.

The chapter on the Biological Work in Madras gives due recognition to the fact that the Presidency was the scene of the earliest biological work done in India, first by the Dutch and then the British. *Hortus Malabaricus*, a seminal work dealing with the flora of the Western Ghats, published over twelve volumes between 1686 and 1703, was commissioned by Henry Van Reede, the Governor of Dutch Malabar as early as 1674. Yet another seminal work that had part origins in the Presidency was *Flora Indica* by William Roxburgh, dealing with the flora of the entire country. Roxburgh arrived in Madras in 1776 as Assistant Surgeon and was later transferred to Kolkata. While in Madras, his main botanical work was on the flora of the Coromandel, published in a series of colour plates.

With each chapter being written by people who, to quote from the foreword, are "specially qualified to write it", the book is a must read as a curtain-raiser for those interested in an in-depth study of the Presidency.

Entering a new world of sounds and noises, it is difficult to resist sharing the experience with fellow senior citizens who are about to seek a hearing aid or have recently adopted one. The first thing I did, upon wearing this device, was to warn my friends of my enlarged faculty with the slogan: Speak carefully! I can now hear everything. It is only fair that they are warned of their being overheard.

Indeed, I could hear everything. I could hear birds chirping on tree branches; in recent years I had not seen many birds in the City, leave alone hearing them chirping on tree branches. Leaves rustled with cinematic sound effect as simulated in movies. We had known that the neighbouring couple were not on good terms, but now I knew every detail of their differences. The ceiling fan seemed to swish at high rpm as if it were part of a turbojet plane about to take off. Kitchen mixies and washing machines in the neighbourhood seemed to be tangoing in harmony. The young thing upstairs is practising *Bharata Natyam* pounding her feet on the floor with martial gusto to *misra chapu thala* in *dhuritha kaala* and I could keep the thala and spot the missing beats.

A Happy New Ear

The hearing instrument I wear, can provide relief to those trying to convey their disagreement to me by non-verbal means - the force with which the coffee tumbler is placed on the table or the son or daughter expressing the right to dissent by shutting the room door with more than

cies" because every mumble is now delivered to the hearing aid user in its raw form - robbing it of its original value.

Prospective entrants to this exclusive club must know that it is not that easy to master the hearing technology. At one time, before I needed the hearing device, I could

● by N.S. Parthasarathy

normal energy to produce the desired sound effect. Gentler effort for such expressions would now be enough to deliver the same or greater impact. Mumbling under one's breath is another age-old innovation in domestic communication. This method allows free vent to disgust, at the same time, transmitting it to the target audience as polite Dissent, the civil cousin of Disgust. Alas, this ingenious type of communication is now in the category of "endangered spe-

hear everything but could listen only to what I wanted. Once I wore the instrument, I lost the right to select for listening, from out of what I hear. I am now forced to hear, magnified to high decibels, everything in the vicinity with no concern for relevance. The range of reach being astonishingly long, a bewildering multitude of sounds are all on offer, all at the same time. I do not know what the Fundamental Right to Privacy, so zealously protected from

Aadhar, can do to safeguard it from hearing aid wearers.

The right to select what we wish to listen to, leads to piquant situations. I must stop the fan if I want to hear the wife speak to me on an important issue. Such important issues do arise frequently. I cannot have the fan and anyone wanting to speak to me making noises at the same time. Also, I cannot eat and hear at the same time. The mastication process is magnified as the rumbling sounds of a massive earth-mover. I must stop chewing if I wish to receive the sounds of what I want to listen to.

The hearing device magnifies our voices to our own hearing - reverberating with stereophonic effect. I always loved hearing my own voice, but continuously magnified to the point of drowning all incoming sounds was the limit. The device cured me, once for all, of the love for my own voice. To keep the voice down, therefore, the hearing aid user speaks in a very low tone, such that it is bearable for him. People, including those endowed with good natural hearing (briefly referred to as the "haves"), tell the hearing aid user (briefly referred to

(Continued on page 7)

Hits and misses during the Season

Come December and there was one violinist who made it to the news. This artiste, who is brilliant when it comes to mastery over the fiddle, has a problem, or maybe I should say problems. Each December there would be talk of how he committed to more than one artiste on certain days and then invariably dumped one for the other. But such is the quality of violin play that artistes would give anything to have this bow-person. Still, that such a gifted artiste could be so prone to making errors in accepting engagements is something of a mystery. Maybe geniuses are like that.

A few years ago, P. Unnikrishnan was the chosen victim. The venue was Chennai Thiruvaiyaru. Now Unni, is always a tad distracted as a person and on days of a concert is even more so. What happened next is best described in his own words:

“I reached the venue on time and right from then till I sat on stage I had this lingering feeling that something was missing. I just could not place what it was. It was just before the curtains went up that I realised there was no violinist.”

There was a desperate scramble to find someone else. Unni called Raghavendra Rao over the phone and though he had just returned from a performance, he gamely agreed to stand in (or should I say sit in?). A happy outcome is that, ever since, Unni has had



P. Unnikrishnan.

Raghavendra Rao accompany him each year for Chennai Thiruvaiyaru.

* * *

It's P. Unnikrishnan again. In the whole of the Carnatic music world you cannot find a gentler soul. This concert was in the early 2000s, at the Narda Gana Sabha (but I am not so sure). The hall was packed to the rafters. The main piece was coming to an end and soon the tani Avartanam would begin. The tambura artiste was fidgeting considerably as though in anticipation. When the percussion interlude began, he indicated to Unni that he had to go offstage. R.K. Shriramkumar the violinist offered to take over the tambura and strum it. The tambura man waddled off and RKS kept the drone.

All this was very well, but even the longest of tanis have to come to a close sometime and sure enough this one too was showing signs of getting over. Soon it would be time for RKS to pick up the violin. Of the tambura man however there was no sign. The tani was

building up to the usual crescendo before ending and both RKS and Unni began looking beseechingly at the audience to see if someone could help out. Fortunately, the mother of violinist Charumati Raghuraman was in the audience and she gamely stepped forward. She took the tambura from RKS who in turn got on with the fiddle just as Unni resumed singing.

The tambura man never did come back. There was much speculation over what happened to him. Many days later I mentioned this episode to a senior lady artiste. She asked for a description of the tambura man and when I did she simply smiled and made the sign of drinking from a bottle. That was a man you never paid before a concert, she said. Only after. But Unni being the gentleman that he is, would have forked out up-front.

* * *

● by Sriram V

It was sometime in 2005 or so. There was a sudden rediscovery of D.K. Pattammal. The grand old lady, though wheelchair-bound, was fit enough to come to sabbas and receive awards and titles. This was in sharp contrast to T. Muktha, who was bedridden. Pattammal made it to a few sabbas, wheeled in by husband Iswaran.

On this occasion, Pattammal was to receive yet another award. The chief guest was His Holiness, a Jeer Swamigal of one of the Vaishnavite mutts. He too was of a venerable vintage. The awards function began. The usual welcome address, the other inanities like shawling, garlanding, mementoing etc. were all gone through and then it was time for His Holiness the Jeer's anugraha vacanam.

He took the mic and spoke at length. Eventually he made it to the point where he had to felicitate Pattammal. Having praised her music in general terms, he then paused. Turning to an aide he spoke in what he assumed was a whisper but was thundered out by the PA system.

“It is Sundaramba, isn't it?,” he bellowed. “The same one who sang GnAnapazhathaipizhindu? Haanh? What was that you said? Sundaramba right? That is what I also said. Yes, yes to be sure it is Sundaramba.”



Embarrassed organisers then whispered into the pontifical ear the correct name. His Holiness did not turn a hair. He went onto praise Pattammal in fulsome terms and duly handed her the award.

The last word was however Pattammal's. In her acceptance speech she said that she had the greatest respect for the Jeer and that he had all her blessings! What she had intended to say was of course that she sought his blessings. The Iyengars in the audience bristled but there was nothing that could be done. Touché, I believe, is the customary expression.

* * *

The Music Academy's annual music Season had wound to a close. It was January 1st and the Sadas was to take place that evening. All the committee members had, as is the custom, turned up in Indian attire. The prize-winning artistes had been contacted over the phone and those that could make it had landed up. Of course, the principal awardees – the Kalanidhi, the Kala Acharyas, the TTK Awardees and the Musicologist of the year – were present. The Chief Guest presently rolled up and as per custom was duly introduced to the Committee Members by the President. Everyone then went in and took their seats on stage. The audience was already in the auditorium.

Even as the prize-winning artistes filed on to the stage and took their seats, there was some confusion. The artistes outnumbered the seats by two.

This was rather unusual as in the Academy such details were taken care of very well. Anyway, as time was short, two extra chairs were brought in and everyone was seated.

Up in the balcony there was a buzz. The aerial view from there enabled people to note that the shortage of seats on stage was caused by a duo from upcountry. Nobody knew how or why they were seated on stage when they were not due to receive any prize. By that process of osmosis that is a feature in any audience this matter soon percolated to the ground floor and even the stiff in the patron rows were smiling. The info somehow reached the stage and one of the hardworking secretaries went up to the duo and whispered into their ear. By then the prayer had been sung and the event was well in progress. But the duo did manage to sneak out, not before the balcony had burst into evil mirth.

Later enquiries revealed that the duo had never sat anywhere in the Academy other than on stage and so had decided to sit there during the Sadas as well. This was surprising as the duo were not newcomers to the Academy and had performed there several times before. A wag suggested that they had done so in the hope that if they sat there long enough someone would have handed them an award anyway. The incident has gone down as one of those unfathomable mysteries of all time, on the lines of the Man in the Iron Mask, the Zamindar of Bhawal and Jack the Ripper.

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A Happy New Ear

(Continued from page 6)

as the “have not”) that they cannot hear him and ask if he would speak louder. The *have-not*, was asking the same of the *haves* till a few days ago before taking to the hearing aid. It is indeed sweet revenge that the positions are reversed. Demographic experts predict that aged people are gradually increasing in number among the total population, thanks to better health and extended longevity. If so, as more aged people wear hearing aids and speak softly, won't more younger people need hearing aids to converse with the old? Only when the world of

sounds is opened to us so tellingly that we realise what a noisy environment it is that we live in. I am now aware that mine has been no small contribution to this noise. Experts say that high noise levels contribute to cardiovascular effects in humans and, in animals, it increases risk of death by altering predator detection and avoidance instincts. According to the World Health Organisation, noise may negatively interfere with a child's learning and behaviour. Let us hope for an environment of lesser noise pollution in the Happy New Year that has just dawned.

Looking beyond sweet 16

At the age of 14, Joshna Chinappa won her first senior national women's title. That was an emotional moment, for that was her first step to stardom. As her career rose with achievements coming in tandem, Joshna began to add more national titles to her kitty. Now, 18 years later, when she had already become the face of Indian squash, this gritty woman had just annexed her 16th national title and what is more equalled the record that her senior, the one-time ace player Bhuvaneshwari Kumari, had held. It was another emotional moment.

Joshna was just six years old when Bhuvaneshwari won her 16th title in 1992. The tiny girl had by then begun to take the first hesitant steps in and round the squash courts at the MCC courts where her father, Anjan Chinappa used to regularly have a squash session. It is doubtful if at that age squash was more a pastime or a sport that she had fallen in love with, but as events from thereon happened, Joshna's attachment to squash kept gaining ground. By the age of ten, this Chennai player told an interviewer of

a popular sports magazine in recent times, she had dreamt of winning 16 national titles! That spoke volumes of her resolve, which only increased as years went by.

Critics would say that in the absence of a strong opposition, Joshna's win in the national was always a foregone conclusion. That is stretching things a little too far, for, after all, it is a competition where anything could happen, not necessarily through the superior play of her opponent alone. Then again, it is not her concern that none

● by S.R. Suryanarayan
Sury98@gmail.com

had really risen to challenge her until Dipika Pallikal. Karthik came strongly into the scene. Two years ago, her Chennai mate, Dipika had beaten Joshna in the nationals' final in Mumbai. Indeed that was the first and only occasion when Joshna was beaten by an Indian rival in any competition in India. Dipika had earlier beaten her three times in events abroad. Many believed that Dipika's

rise would truly start a healthy rivalry. True, Dipika's presence would have added spice to the women's competition, but what could be done if she could not participate on a regular basis.

In New Delhi this time, Dipika was absent. Still, it would be far from the truth to say Joshna thus had a cakewalk, for Urwashi Joshi, her opponent in the final, grabbed the first game to make it a contest. It is a different matter that this highly ranked Indian professional made light of that dent to win handsomely. But that is what supremacy does. Joshna that way may be excused if she dreams of adding a few more national titles to her kitty before she hangs up her racket! To have the national record in her name is her next goal and, for all you know, it will come about next year, if she continues to remain fit and keeps performing.

Indeed, every year has been a happening year for this genial player, who is the first squash player to earn a job in the Government with her credentials. She is a senior sports officer with the TNEB. Last year, Joshna became the first Indian till date to win the Asian senior championship title, something that she achieved in front of the home crowd in Express Avenue Mall. And whom did she beat but Dipika herself in the final! This year, aside from the National success, she also had the distinction of being the first Indian player to beat the Malaysian legend Nicol David not once but twice, at a professional tournament and then

the Asian Games. The result meant a lot, because Nicol, a one time World Number One, is held in such high esteem in squash circles.

Into her thirties now, Joshna remains fit as a fiddle and continues to participate in professional tournaments with the same enthusiasm that had helped her rise high in the sport. Clearly she enjoys competitions and challenges, not to speak of the rigours of training, for it is rare to see Joshna skipping a tournament. "As long as I enjoy the game" has been her motto



and every squash lover would wish that this enjoyment continued and Joshna would bring to herself and the country more laurels in the period ahead.

Mylapore Festival

(Continued from page 4)

Kreeda will also set up a mela of traditional games on the weekend of the festival inside Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls' School campus, after 4 pm on the two days.

There are six heritage Walks on offer – from social histories of Ramakrishna Mutt Road (by V. Sriram) to the stories of Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai (by Nivedita Louis), besides a Tree Walk in Nageswara Rao Park, two Food Walks by Sridhar Venkataraman, and a Vintage Houses Walk by architect Tahaer Zoyab. All walks are free and do not need advance registration.

Nageswara Rao Park, Luz, will host classical music concerts every morning – mikes are not used here.

The Festival's flagship event is the Kolam Contest – two will be held on North Mada Street on January 12th and 13th.

This edition of the Mylapore Festival expands to South Mada Street – where the pavement along the temple tank will showcase a photo show – visuals of Mylapore of the past – and an Art Show curated by Poornima of The Art Room.

The Food Stalls Street, the most popular of the festival will come alive on all four evenings.

This year, a showcase of eco-products will be on East Tank Street (off the west gopuram of Sri Kapali Temple) – curated by Organic Farmers' Market's Anantha Sayanan.

The festival is fully supported by Sundaram Finance. All details at www.mylaporefestival.com

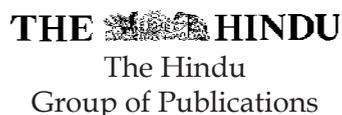
Answers to Quiz

1. Train 18, 2. Luka Modric, 3. Hindustan Unilever Limited, 4. ExseedSAT 1, 5. Salman Khan, 6. IndiGo, 7. \$80 billion, 8. Puducherry, 9. Karnataka, 10. @CyberDost.

* * *

11. Thiruvaiyaru, 12. Bhavani Devi, 13. Karisal Bhoomi, 14. Nel Jayaraman, 15. 181, 16. Kanimozhi, 17. Shaktikanta Das, 18. Aringnar Anna Park in Washermenpet, 19. Jones Tower, 20. Mint Street and Nainiappa Naicken Street.

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