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# MADRAS MUSINGS

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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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## How smart are Smart City projects?

● by The Editor

It is now around five years since the Central Government announced its Smart City project, under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The mission, aimed at 100 cities of India, was meant to make them function better under various heads such as Mobility, Energy, Water, Technology and Environment. It was expected that these initiatives would improve the quality of life, get people to participate in governance, bring about transparency in the functioning of those in authority and promote public consultation. It is a moot point as to whether any of this has been achieved.

The *Short and Snappy* column in MM, (June 1st (*The Isthmus of T'Nagar*)) featured a write up on the inordinate expansion of footpaths at the expense of carriageway at Sir Theagaroya Road. The subsequent week, a prominent business daily of the city carried a photograph of the same thoroughfare that showed cars parked on the broad sidewalk. The caption below asked if Chennai was really ready for such smart city solutions. The implied message was that it was not. We would readily agree with that sentiment. A year back, we had the much-publicised launch of a bike-sharing initiative, promot-

ed by a worldwide company. Chennai was one of seven Indian cities where this was taken up. The operations were wound up within six months. It was rumoured that continued theft of bicycles hit the company hard. This year the Corporation of Chennai has reintroduced the same scheme, under its auspices, thereby becoming the first civic body in the country to promote cycling in a big way. It is still early days to comment on how the plan has fared but we need to only look at our roads to wonder if cycling safely is at all feasible.

The announcement of the Smart City initiative has seen many consultants descend on

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Our THEN is a picture of Sir R.K. Shanmukham Chetty (from the RKS Commemoration Volume, 1952) first Union Finance Minister of India getting ready to present the budget. Our NOW, is of Nirmala Seetharaman, the present Finance Minister arriving in Parliament to present the latest budget (from *The Hindu*). Both are people with Madras connects. We have, of course, had several men of Madras who have served as Union

Finance Ministers – T.T. Krishnamachari, R. Venkataraman and P. Chidambaram. We can stretch a little and include C.D. Deshmukh as well, for after all, did he not marry 'our very own' Durgabai?



## The Implications of One Nation, One Poll

● by A Special Correspondent

Leaving aside the debate on the political and constitutional implications of the *One Nation One Poll* idea, synchronising 32 State assembly elections with that of the Lok Sabha in 2024, in such a manner that the combined cycle is kept rolling in the future, is an interesting exercise in itself. It calls for the transition from the current situation of multiple elections occurring at different times to be smooth, and have a minimal impact on the duration

of office conferred on the State governments by the electorate.

There are four main issues that govern the final decision of accepting or rejecting the idea of *One Poll* – its advantages, its bearing on the federal balance, its impact on the common voter's understanding of the distinction between the State and Centre seeking votes si-

multaneously and finally, its feasibility. The desirability of *One Poll* is left to constitutional pundits and political parties to argue out. It is the feasibility that is an interesting puzzle and the focus of this piece.

Some quarters tend to dismiss the idea of *One Poll* outright on the ground that it is complex and not feasible. This

note indulges in some speculative thinking on the feasibility of *One Poll*, which should be considered before debating its merits and demerits. If found infeasible, the *One Poll* idea need not be pursued, saving time and energy. If it is found feasible, it is worthwhile evaluating the merits, demerits and deeper implications of *One Poll*. The illustrative proposal is as follows, which is not necessarily the ideal or only solution.

A framework is necessary within which to explore the feasibility of *One Poll*.

State elections should fall in line with the Lok Sabha election, not vice versa. Lok Sabha election years are, by and large, predictable. Therefore, it qualifies to be the reference

point for State Assemblies to synchronise with.

The adjustment must take place over a full 5-year cycle for its completion.

It is a one-time adjustment of the term of assemblies to initiate the combined cycle. Future *General Election Dates* (GED) are 2024, 2029, 2034 and so on. Currently, the GED 2024 can be the reference point for adjusting the duration of State Assemblies, as practically, the entire cycle of 5 years is still ahead. Thereafter, both State and Central elections become due together every 5 years.

State Assemblies can be held in four possible situations depending on the remaining

(Continued on page 2)

# Implications of One Nation, One Poll

(Continued from page 1)

duration for the next Lok Sabha election. They are as follows, with the recommended synchronising “adjustment” for each.

Situation A: When the current term of office extends beyond GED 2024 – The term will be terminated during GED 2024.

Situation B: When the present term of office expires before GED 2024, with more than 2 years still left for GED 2024 – An election will be held for a specified term of office of the newly elected government to expire at GED 2024.

Situation C: When the present term of office expires before GED 2024, with less than 2 years still left for GED 2024 – The term of office of the ruling government can be extended till GED 2024 or, if the remaining duration is only a few months, President’s Rule can be proclaimed.

Situation D: When the present term of office expires in sync with GED 2024 – It is in sync with the General Election. No special action is needed.

By following the above rules, all State elections will have aligned with the *One Poll* in GED 2024, and the combined elections will take place every 5 years thereafter. By-elections for vacancies will be as usual and will not affect or be affected by the synchronisation plan. But certain unavoidable contingencies would, even if occasionally, occur. Would these disturb the initial situational settings listed above, and take us back to the chaotic multiplicity of elections almost throughout the year?

There could be one or more of four such contingencies.

One, a State Government falls for want of confidence of the House and an alternative government is formed from among the members of the same House. This does not disturb the initial settings.

Two, the State government falls *without* alternative government formation. The resultant situation is analogous to Situation B and action is taken accordingly. Or, it could be like Situation C, in which case, instead of extending the term of a government that has lost confidence, President’s Rule is imposed for the remaining period till GED 2024. This also does not disturb the initial settings.

Three, the Central government prematurely falls *with* alternative government formation from among members of the same House. This will not change GED or the way State governments synchronise with the GED. This also does not disturb the initial settings.

Four, Central Government falls *with no possibility* of alternative government formation from among members of the same House. This is the *only* occurrence that will call for review and re-setting of all the assembly durations with reference to the new GED. For example: If, due to the fall of the Central Government, the Lok Sabha election is forced in 2021 itself instead of 2024, the next election after 5 years will be 2026. State Assemblies will now be adjusted to correspond with the *new* GED in 2026, according to the norms spelt out earlier in this note, for the four Situations.

How often does this fourth type of contingency occur? Is it frequent enough to render the *One Poll* idea too complex to undertake? In 70 years, we should have had 14 Parliaments but we had 16, indicating that such a glitch has happened twice in 70 years, that is, once in 35 years. Thus, the premature fall of governments do not cause any major threat to the continuance of the combined cycle.

Does this plan negate the voice of the People? When the term is ended prematurely, it is to replace it with another elected government; and when it is extended, it is only that of an elected government enjoying the confidence of the House. President’s Rule is confined to short periods and that too only when the government falls, leaving a vacuum. Thus, it is seen that the “adjustments” – meant only to initiate the cycle and not to be a permanent device – ensure the continuity of the people’s voice in every situation.

Would there be political bias in making the “adjustments”? To provide against it, the power could be vested in a constitutionally instituted body similar to the GST Council, representing all the States and the Centre, with the same kind of voting rights and stature.

Summing up, *One Poll* is feasible and can be maintained successfully. The premature fall of governments does not disturb the initial settings. Only the premature fall of the Central Government, and that too with no possibility for an alternate formation, would call for the state schedules to be reset according to the change in GED 2024. Thus, infeasibility cannot be the reason for rejecting the idea of *One Poll*. If the decision to go ahead with *One Nation One Poll* is taken by April 2021, it may be possible to make it a reality for 2024. If 2024 is missed, it must wait till 2029.

# Meandering down the Marina

It has been quite a while since *The Man from Madras Musings* sauntered down the sidewalk by the Marina. Now, circumstances have so arranged themselves that he can do that on practically any day he wants and MMM has begun to do just that, enjoying himself thoroughly in the process. What a fine prospect the beach is, to be sure, where everything pleases but only man is vile.

Mind you, it is not just fellow humankind that MMM has complaints about. The bovine population is also rather high. MMM does not dispute their right to the footpath either, and would be the first person to give right of way. It is only when they begin walking behind MMM that he becomes all nervous and has a tendency of speeding up. Unlike most other people, MMM can take any number of stray dogs in his stride. He looks upon them as the idle wind which he respects not, as the poet someone or the other said. But when it comes to cows, and more importantly buffaloes and bulls, he is all caution. Unlike dogs, they do not bark or give any prior warning as to when they propose to charge. And there is no way of predicting why they charge either. Like the Jallikattu protests, they just happen.

Another objection that MMM has to the bovine is their habit of doing their ablations (as they are referred to in old Chennai speak) out in the open and leaving their output behind on the footpath. What with the Marina being lined with polished granite, the presence of dung makes for deadly consequences. But here again, MMM will forgive the bovine and for that matter, the canine, the caprine and the equine, all of whom apparently view the Marina as their favourite toilet spot. But what excuse does humankind have to add to the collection of excrement especially when such large public latrines have been built on the sands for it to literally cavort in?

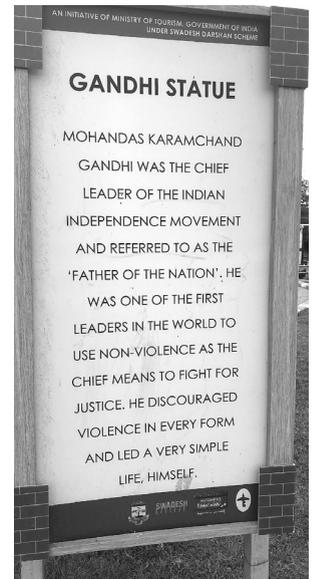
Unlike the humans on the beach however, the cattle have a great traffic sense and much discipline. Each morning, having completed their business on the sands or on the sidewalk, they cross the beach road in single file. MMM is informed that they do collide frequently, especially when it is dark, with pedestrians and cyclists, but MMM would blame the two-legged rather than the four for such incidents.

And then what of the avian variety? Feeding pigeons appears to have become more a menace than an act of kindness. How then is MMM to explain the phenomenon of dozens of men and women, all of a certain regulation outside, wheezing down the walkway laden with bags of grain? They scatter these left, right and centre and MMM may not be wrong in assuming that the Marina has more leftover grain on it than sand. The birds descend in vast clouds and fly around repeatedly. All very pretty no doubt. We have not yet had an incident of a pack of birds making away with a human but then you can never put it past these winged creatures. Remember the old tale when they hoodwinked a hunter by flying away with his net?

## Know your statue

*The Man from Madras Musings* also notes that there has been a considerable effort on the part of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (the State counterpart in MMM’s view does nothing) to put explanatory notes on the various statues

as the Kingmaker in Indian politics during the 1960s! The most significant detail about the Lighthouse is that it has an elevator! MMM provides alongside some of the kiosks so that you can read them and get an idea.



Is that all they could think of? And if he used non-violence, he clearly discouraged violence. Then why repeat it?

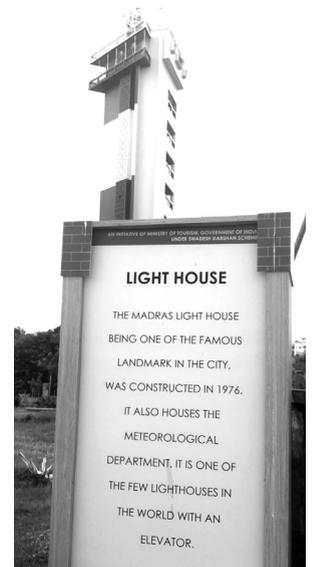
## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

dotting the beach. These are on handsomely designed kiosks, with the front having the text in Tamil and the rear in English. There is of course no standardisation by way of positioning of the kiosks and most are at all odd angles and often behind trees and bushes, thereby necessitating your being a yogic expert to be able to read all that is written. And that is where MMM has his principal objection, for much of the text appears to have been cribbed from a junior school primer.

When you write about historic personalities, you begin by stating their time period. Not so here, and no kiosk, not even that of the Father of the Nation has dates. This is surprising for the granite pedestals of each of the statues carries the details and even the most cursory searches on the Internet, from which most of India gets its history and historians these days, would have revealed the same data. As for the biographical details, they are the most pedantic and have in some cases left out some of the most significant contributions of the person. The text for Kamaraj has no mention of his contribution to making Tamil Nadu an industrialised State. It on the other hand highlights that he was known



There is something so innocent about this text, just like a third standard student’s essay.



Grammar please.

–MMM

OUR  
READERS  
WRITE



### U. Prabhakar Rao

In the passing away of U. Prabhakar Rao on June 9, we have lost a doyen of TN cricket. He was a cricketer-cum-administrator par excellence, highly regarded for his honesty and hard work. During his playing days, he captained the TN Ranji team; both he and Satwendar Singh narrowly missing the National cap because of political partisanship in the Cricket Board. He was a great pace bowler who, even at the age of 72, played for MCC in their annual matches. Such was his determination and love for cricket. He was stately, tall, fair, simple and had a no-nonsense approach to life. He loved

TNCA so much that every day, after his work ended at 5.30 p.m, he would drive down to their office to attend to administrative matters.

He was the TNCA Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President, till he gave up the posts due to ill health. The President of TNCA, Mr. Srinivasan, invited him as a Chief Guest for their Annual Day to honour his peerless contribution to TN cricket.

He was my father's friend of many years and to me, a godfather, guide and adviser. I was often referred to as "Sir's pet nephew" by his office staff, as I could walk into his cabin at Patullos Road at will, without an appointment. He would make a cup of coffee for me in his instant coffee jar and we both used to share small talk over a cup of coffee. I used to address him as "Uncle Prabhakar" and

always took his blessings every New Year.

Many a time, I have seen veteran players like Mr. V.A.P, Mr. Jagannathan and others meeting him for his inputs on cricket.

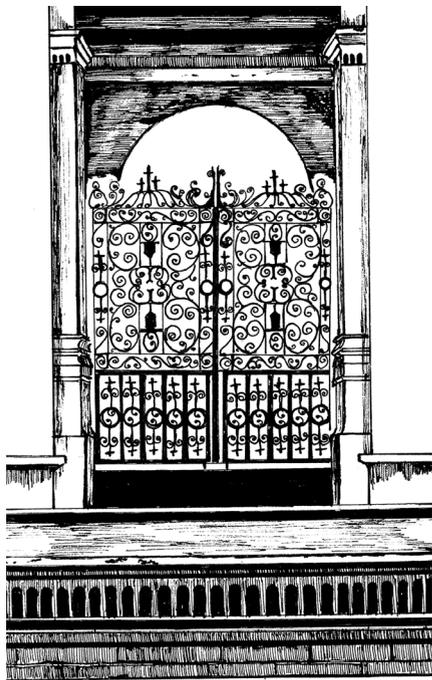
When his second daughter Pavitra (who represented India in Rowing along with her sister Arati Rao in the 1990 Asian Games) died in a car accident, he took it in his stride with a stoic silence and said it was the will of god. He was a god-fearing person who would commence his daily routine with a pooja. He will definitely be missed by all who dealt with him; particularly for me, his death is a personal loss, as I have lost my godfather and guide. RIP "Uncle Prabhakar".

M. Fazal

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## ● Pavithra's Perspective

### The Lonely Gate



*As a girl, I was not an adventurous sightseer; when I travelled (which wasn't much), I stuck to the usual paths and never strayed beyond the lines. Authority figures terrified me and I always took care never to antagonize them;*

*staying in my place usually worked. Despite visiting the Museum Theatre in Egmore in 5th Std and then a few more times later, I never thought to step beyond a few feet on either side of the door.*

*But my fascination only grew over the years – that perfectly round edifice with its beautiful red-brick face and the clear aura of history cast a never-fading allure. Once I'd explored the theatre itself, I began to venture outside the boundaries I'd drawn for myself, which is where I saw this beautifully designed gate. It stood quite alone, waiting for what or whom, I never quite knew. No one seemed interested in opening it; it seemed to be guarding a gateway to nowhere. How many people have stood here, Indian or English? What conversations had happened as people leaned negligently against it? Who had passed through, and when? It wasn't just this one; Madras itself seems chock-full of enigmatic places and monuments like this – once important and relevant, now forgotten.*

*The idea of it was enchanting, not to mention the intricate working as well. It was surprisingly easy to draw, and I finished it within two hours.*

Description: 3.5" by 3.5" approximately  
Medium: Black Micron pen.

● Pavithra Srinivasan is a writer, journalist, artist, translator, columnist, an editor and is fascinated with History.

## The Smart City projects

(Continued from page 1)

Indian cities and Chennai is no exception. It is rumoured that there are as many as ten different organisations simultaneously working on the scheme, all of them claiming to be in collaboration with the Corporation. It is quite likely that none of them is working with the others and therefore most of them may be at cross-purposes. Have we not had the same problem and suffered enough with Government agencies negating each other's work for decades?

Most of these consultants and the NGOs they have spawned appear to be working hard at bringing in international solutions that have no truck with ground reality. Take for instance the footpath widening scheme at T Nagar - is it all likely that vehicles would be parked on them in a western capital or for that matter even in a neighbouring country like Sri Lanka? And yet people in Chennai do it. Would it not have been better to first influence people in following the law before embarking on such solutions? The same applies to creating artistic and recreational spaces beneath flyovers. Given the weather conditions and the chaotic traffic, who in their right senses wants to relax under a flyover? And given the level of poverty and homelessness, will the less privileged people not make a beeline to these spaces?

It would be far better to focus on certain basic factors than on such eye candy schemes that gather immediate publicity and are then forgotten or misused or worse, cause harm. Can there be smart solutions to water management, property encroachment, traffic violation, public transport, coordination

## Horses that raced hearts

Once, Poonamallee, Alandur and Butt Road flaunted many lively race enthusiasts who dreamed of making a killing at Guindy. That the racehorses took them for a ride when they put their shirts on a 'hot tip' is the stark reality. A thoroughbred expected to gallop on thundering hooves and win by a yard, would sometimes betray its backers by trotting or even walking, with equine indifference.

Several factors were attributed to a horse's stellar performance – its pedigree (the sire, in particular), upkeep and most importantly, the quality of its feed. Exercise, including occasional swims in the equine pool & regular brush-downs, and the jockeys' skill in staying the distance were crucial. A hotshot jockey must be nimble and compact, lightweight and focused. An interesting tidbit: the racehorses loved feeding on sugar cubes when their proud owners came to the paddock to pat their flanks with a proprietary air.

A gentleman of leisure I knew, who never did a day's honest work but lived on his father-in-law's legacy, had strange habits. Though he had a small Buck Fiat, he would travel to the bus stand only by a jutka (a horse drawn carriage) and count the number of carriages yet to be taken. That number was the lucky number that he would place his bets on. The alpaca coat he wore had several pockets, in which he stuffed his winnings. It was rumoured that if the horse relieved its bladder when it drove him, he would win big money that day. Once, it relieved its bladder and as a bonus, its bowels as well. Wonder of wonders, he won an incredibly huge jackpot that was carried over for weeks. In gratitude, he commissioned a statue of the animal in Italian marble and installed it at the portico of his bungalow. Racing was such an integral part of him that if his chubby wife was slow in bringing his refreshments, he would chivvy her, hollering 'Come on, Panja Kalyani. Come on!' But few backers were as lucky as him; more often than not, those animals took one to the cleaners.

The typical punter would find himself short on cash and filch the money stashed by his wife. He would then place his bets after setting aside his bus/train fare for the ride home. He would invariably end up cursing the horse for its treachery, though in all fairness, there was no covenant between him and the animal for such deliverance. If the horse could have heard his curses, it would have kicked his fundament in unbridled fury.

But not everyone in Guindy, where Chennai has its race course, is a horseracing fanatic. Once, I had boarded a train at Guindy on a Sunday afternoon when my office watchman whispered conspiratorially to me, 'Sir, Lady of Shalott will win today, even if she walks.' I was bemused to be mistaken for a punter. But I comforted myself with the Tamil proverb: 'Even if one drinks a glass of milk under a palmyrah tree, it would be mistaken for toddy!'

J.S. Raghavan

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between Government departments, local area planning, river cleanups and social welfare schemes? If these are managed by smart city solutions we would have a great city, one that can

justify its listing a few years ago among the 52 most liveable metros the world. Everything else we are sorry to say, is mere eyewash.

## Thank you, Donors

We today, publish donations received with thanks for the period upto June 1st.

– The Editor

**Rs. 150:** George Joseph

**Rs. 400:** Capt. R. Shankar

**Rs. 500:** R. Balasubramanian; T.K. Sriniva Chari

**Rs. 900:** V. Ramnarayan; Benjamin Cherian; T. Santhanam; K. Nirmala

**Rs. 1000:** Gopal Raj C., Girija Viraraghavan

**Rs. 1500:** N.S. Parthasarathy

# The first Ayurveda Hospital in Madras

The history of most of the famous hospitals of the city that follow the allopathic discipline is well documented. But what of the institutions that provided healthcare the Indian way through the three principal streams of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani? Not much is known about these and their histories can only be reconstructed through scattered references. One among such hospitals was the Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Devasthanam Dharma Ayurveda Vaidyashala. It functioned in the first decades of the 20th century and faded away thereafter, though it did leave behind some very famous successor institutions in its wake.

It was, as the name suggests, a charitable Ayurvedic hospital, more of dispensary, attached to the Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Devasthanam (SKPD) located in the Kothwal Chawadi area of George Town. As per the reminiscences of Dr. K.N. Kesari, the well-known Ayurvedic practitioner of later years, this was begun by the priests of the temple together with Paluri Rajan Chetty, a prominent businessman of the Arya Vaisya community. Further details are available in a pamphlet that the hospital published in 1908 as per which the institution came into existence on August 14, 1898 and in the first year attended to 14,731 patients, the number increasing to a record 69,000 by the end of the first decade.

The man behind the success of the free hospital was its head – Pandit D. Gopalacharyulu (also spelt as Gopalacharlu). In a biographical note he gives in the same pamphlet cited above, he states that he came from a family that was traditionally into the practise of Ayurveda. But as he grew up, he desired to present the science in a more systematic way just as western medicine was, and so enrolled himself at the Mysore Maharajah's Sanskrit College and after graduating, went on an all India tour to familiarise himself with Ayurvedic practices elsewhere. He later worked at a dispensary in Bangalore where his formulations were successful. In 1901, he joined the SKPD's Free Hospital in Madras.

Once appointed, he brought in considerable changes to the functioning of the place. Realising that institutions like the General Hospital have a Medical College as an adjunct, he together with the hospital committee set up an Ayurvedic

College in which students were trained in Hindu Medical Science. While Sanskrit texts were taught by Gopalacharyulu and his assistants, he also ensured that modern concepts such as hygiene were imparted by doctors trained in the allopathic stream. The prequalification to gain admission was a working knowledge of Sanskrit and the student had to be below 25 years of age. The graduate degree was Vidvat and there was a post-Vidvat course as well. The annual examinations

stock was neatly stored and labelled. There was one complaint that the room was too small for a hospital that catered to more than 200 patients in a day. An interesting testimonial is one of 1904 from V Krishnaswami Iyer, the famed Vakil who would later become Judge of the High Court of Madras and still later Member of the Governor's Executive Council. He writes that the concept of an Ayurvedic hospital is worthy of encouragement and more should come up soon. Was

## LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

– SRIRAM V

happened in December, with professors from other parts of India conducting them. The graduates were termed Proficients as was the case with the University of Madras.

The SKPD instituted scholarships of Rs 10 per month for seven students and Pt Gopalacharyulu supplemented this with ten scholarships from his private funds. The money came from his Ayurvedic Laboratory, which he set up in his personal capacity at Acharappan Street, George Town, and which soon became a great success, in particular for its plague cure. There were besides, medicines for a whole host of ailments such as diabetes, asthma, anaemia, biliousness, loss of hair, leprosy, constipation and nervous debilities apart from oils that could be applied as unguents and used for massages. These were sold all over India and soon the Pandit began receiving several testimonials all of which he put to good use as advertisements. Several titles were conferred on him and he prefixed them all to his name, his letterheads referring to him as Ayurveda Marthanda Bhisangamani Pandit D Gopalacharlu. He participated in All India Ayurvedic Conferences. At the Calcutta Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition of 1906, he was awarded a gold medal.

Some of the testimonials given in the 1908 pamphlet carry references to the way the hospital was laid out. There were evidently no in-patients. Those that came were segregated by sex and Pt Gopalacharyulu and two assistants attended to them. The storeroom where medicines were kept was evidently the place that most visitors were taken to for they all write in its praise, in particular the way in which all

this therefore the inspiration behind his setting up the Venkataramana Ayurveda Dispensary in Mylapore a year later?

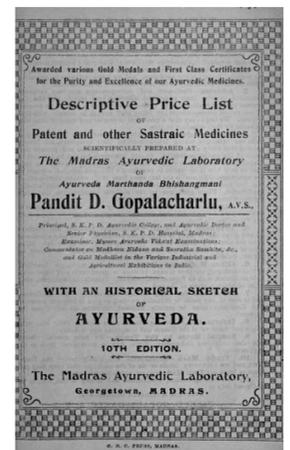
Early in his tenure at the SKPD, Pt. Gopalacharyulu was introduced to KN Kesari, and the latter became his assistant. Though younger by a few years to the Pandit, Kesari had had a long



Pt. D. Gopalacharyulu – from the autobiography of Dr. A. Lakshmiopathy, courtesy: Rukmini Amirapu.

medication be marketed there. But he was hesitant as he was not familiar with English. Kesari did the selling and when money began coming in, was shocked to find he was to get nothing for his efforts. He resigned and opted to start on his own, founding his Kesari Kuteeram thereafter.

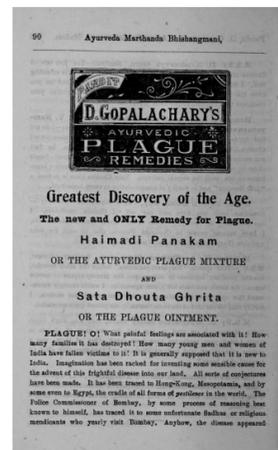
But there was no stopping



A Madras Ayurvedic Laboratory pamphlet, 1908.

ger tenure in Madras, having run away to the city in 1888 when he was just 13. He was thus of immense help to Gopalacharyulu, finding him a place to stay and also getting some of the Chettys to loan the Pandit some money. From Kesari's writings we get to know that the SKPD Hospital was in Godown Street.

It was the Ayurvedic Plague Mixture that Gopalacharyulu developed, which caused trouble between him and Kesari, after they had worked together for four years very closely. Realising that Bangalore was having one of its frequent plague epidemics, Gopalacharyulu desired that his



Gopalacharyulu. The sale of his medicines and the success of the Ayurvedic College, where students from various parts of India had begun to join and study, had made him a celebrity. When the SKPD decided for reasons unknown to close down the college, he opted to take it over in his personal capacity and run it. Several prominent allopathic practitioners of the city had come to see the merits in his formulations and medications and were his ardent supporters. Chief among these was Dr A Lakshmiopathy, a qualified eye surgeon from the Madras Medical College who became lecturer at the

# A painless surgery on a mesmerised patient

● Very little is known about the life of Joseph William Turner Johnstone in Madras. What instigated him to come to Madras to practise medicine is not clear. He lived and practised at '23 Pantheon Road, Madras' in the 1840s for less than four years and died due to liver abscess in Madras in 1848 (Anonymous, 1849).

Johnstone's painless surgical operation via mesmerism

Mesmerism was a significant practice trialed in pain management during surgeries, especially in pre-anaesthesia days. Franz Anton Mesmer's (1734-815) work stimulated the application of mesmerism in medicine. Johnstone in his 1848 report explains his conviction in applying mesmerism in surgical procedures.

The patient on whom Johnstone operated was the wife of a clergyman of the Church of England. The lady was a person of good health, who developed a field-pea size tumour on the posterior aspect of her right shoulder six years before. When she presented herself to Johnstone, the tumour had enlarged to 6×4×2½" (15×10×6.5 cm). A sensation of weight and modest numbness of the right arm were the principal difficulties she complained of. Johnstone indicates that he advised excision of the tumour six months earlier, which she did not prefer. In the meantime, she had tried phlebotomy using leeches and applying discutient ointments, and other treatments, which were in vain. Finally, she returned to Johnstone accepting excision. Johnstone recommended her to try

Ayurvedic College, teaching the subjects of Anatomy and Surgery from 1914. The two attended several Ayurvedic conferences, and protested vehemently when the Madras Government mulled over abolishing the practice of Ayurveda on the grounds that it was unscientific. Lakshmiopathy also became a student of Pt Gopalacharyulu, studying Ayurveda under him for five years. Thus when the latter suddenly died in September 1920, it was but natural for the former to take on the running of the Ayurvedic College and the Laboratory.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

The author thanks Karthik Bhatt for providing the 1908 pamphlet on the dispensary.

the effect of mesmerism before the procedure.

We reproduce below his words, wherein he describes the mesmeric practice he applied on the woman in advance of the procedure to be done a few days later:

1st Mesmeric Sitting, January 2nd

Commenced at half past 7 A.M. and continued for two hours. The room was darkened and precautions taken to prevent interruption by noise & c. as was done at all the future sittings. The patient's pulse was 90 – skin cool – respiration natural. She lay upon her back in bed. ... I seated myself on a high chair at the head of the bed, so placed that by slightly bending forwards I could bring my face close to hers. I requested her to fix her eyes steadily on mine till she felt drowsy, when she was to shut them and compose herself to sleep; at the same time I passed my right hand, with the fingers extended and slightly bent, gently over her face, from chin upwards, in close contact with, but not actually touching the skin. I kept my left hand in constant contact with her left shoulder and breathed gently and frequently over her forehead and eyes. About one hour from the commencement, her eyes were shut, and she appeared to be slumbering, as indicated by her tranquil breathing, and the complete state of repose exhibited by her whole body, excepting occasional nervous twitchings of the hands and eyelids. On leaving off the manipulations at the end of two hours, and walking round to her right side, she opened her eyes heavily, and was speedily aroused. She said that she had felt sleepy, but did not think she had been asleep. Pulse still 90. I recommended another trial (though she did not appear very susceptible of the mesmeric influence) to which she consented somewhat reluctantly.

The above was repeated almost for the same length of time over the next seven days. On 9 January, Johnstone mesmerised the woman for three hours commencing a little after 7 a.m. She felt no drowsiness and sickness and sleepiness as had occurred in the preceding days. Body readings were normal. According to Johnstone, 'pulse – 80, skin cool, respiration slow and tranquil'. She fell into deep sleep shortly at around 10 a.m. Mesmeric trance appeared perfect, cataleptic condition well developed, and sensitivity to pinching, pricking, loud noises, strong light, and ammonia vapour was absent. At quarter past 10, Johnstone turned her full upon face to start the surgery.

He made three incisions, each seven inches (17.8 cm) long. He excised the tumour, which was slightly adherent to tissues below. Three arteries required ligatures. The bleeding was profuse initially, which lessened with time. The edges of the wound were sutured with four stitches and in-between spaces banded with adhesive plaster. The surgery was completed in 18 minutes, during which the patient remained in a state of perfect insensibility.

Johnstone was assisted by Superintendent Surgeon D.S. Young of Madras Army, Assistant Surgeon George Smith, a dresser and a nurse (both not named). Smith assisted Johnstone by maintaining the mesmeric passes along the patient's back throughout the procedure.

● by Ramya Raman and Anantanarayanan Raman

Throughout the procedure, the pulse reading remained at 80 and respiration steady. Johnstone indicates that Young, besides assisting Johnstone, satisfied himself with the patient's basic physiological parameters. The excised tumour tissue weighed 1.45 kg, two hours after the procedure. Pulse reading sustained at 80 for the next two days, which gradually rose to 90, which he deems as her natural value. The patient recovered quickly and felt better than she did before the mesmeric sittings.

Johnstone offers a few conclusions, which we summarise here:

- (1) Induced mesmerism can be so deep that the sense of feeling is annihilated.
- (2) Such induced mesmerisms are starkly different from normal sleep and that induced by the action of narcotic drugs.
- (3) The person subjected to mesmeric process is more readily susceptible to an extreme state of sleep.
- (4) Mesmerism-induced sleep is the most perfect state of sleep, when intense surgical procedures can be conducted, and
- (5) The excessive bleeding he encountered during the surgery did not appear to be lesser than what would have

occurred in surgeries performed otherwise.

Young's minute to the Madras medical board and follow up

Superintending Surgeon Young participated in the surgery done by Johnstone. We reproduce below the relevant sections from his Minute dispatched to George Pearce, Secretary of the Madras Medical Board, Government letter # 44, dated 19 January 1847 (page 13):

I have the greatest satisfaction in submitting the enclosed statement to the Medical Board, and the subject of 'Painless Surgical Operations' under Mesmeric influence, has, since the publication of Dr. Esdaile's reports [Esdaile and his work are briefly explained subsequently], excited a deep and

universal interest. I would express a confident hope, that the present most triumphant illustration of the practice may be brought to the notice of the Government.

In making this request, I am impelled by a sense of justice to call the Board's especial attention to the merits of Dr. Johnstone, a private practitioner at the Presidency, by whose well-directed and unwearied skill and perseverance, the great work has been achieved for the first time in the case of an European patient in British India, or indeed in the Eastern world. Nor I can close this letter without reminding the Board that Assistant Surgeon G. Smith who so admirably seconded Dr Johnstone's efforts throughout ...

However, a statement in the Minute is fallacious and regrettable. Young exaggerates as though Johnstone's work of applying mesmerism during the excision of the tumour in Madras is pioneering: this is nothing short of prejudice and hype. Esdaile in Calcutta had preceded Johnstone in performing multiple procedures, retaining patients under mesmeric influence. Johnstone himself acknowledges this in his notes. Pity that a senior medical officer of the Madras Army could make such a flippant statement.

Applying mesmerism in surgeries

The inimitability of Johnstone's surgery in Madras was



An oil canvas depicting the use of ether by William Morton as an anaesthetic on a patient before a dental treatment in 1846. Source: Ernest Board, <http://catalogue.wellcome.ac.uk/record=b1203716> (Public Domain).

applying mesmerism to quieten the patient into deep slumber.

John Bell's *General and Particular Principles of Animal Electricity and Magnetism* (1792) is possibly the earliest printed record on using mesmerism in minor surgical procedures, although it includes no explicit details of either the surgical or the mesmeric procedure. Joseph Claude Anselme Récamier (1774–1856) in Paris performed a surgery with the patient maintained under mesmeric influence. The first recorded painless surgery using mesmerism was a mastectomy performed by the French Surgeon Jules Germain Cloquet in 1829. Cloquet presented a paper on this procedure at L'Académie Royale de Médecine (ARM) in 1829. L'ARM appointed a Committee to verify Cloquet's claim. The Committee disagreed with Cloquet. Infrequent work using mesmerism in surgical practice did occur; however, the medical community in general was facetious of it. Elliotson resurrected this interest in Britain in 1837.

James Esdaile of the Bengal Medical Establishment (Civil Assistant Surgeon, 1830-1836; Civil Surgeon and Principal of the Hooghly College, Calcutta, 1838–1843) trialed mesmerism variously in mitigating surgical pain. He superintended the Calcutta Mesmeric Hospital. He published three articles on this subject and *Mesmerism in India, and its Practical Application in Surgery and Medicine*, the first edition of which appeared in 1846.

Johnstone's interest in applying mesmerism in surgical procedures appears to have principally arisen out of two sources.

- (1) He refers to Esdaile's procedures in Calcutta done under mesmeric influence and the Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 4 November 1846.
- (2) He expresses deep confidence in mesmeric practice in surgery after reading Bar-

on Dupotet de Sennevy's *An Introduction to Animal Magnetism* (1838). The following remark in the 'Miscellaneous' section in the American Journal of Medical Sciences

'animal magnetism is making significant progress in London and some highly distinguished persons of London have become converts to its verity'

is noteworthy. Johnstone reinforces in his *Notes of a Case of a Painless Surgical Operation ...* that mesmerism was taught in the medical school (i.e., Madras Medical School) – with which he was not associated as an academic – where, he indicates, students have been mesmerising one another under the superintendence of the head surgeon. He endorses his conviction in this procedure because of the success achieved at MMS using native pupils and a few apprentices.

Conclusion

Today a majority of practicing surgeons reject mesmerism (or its derivative, hypnosis) in procedures. However, casual conversations with a few practicing surgeons in India revealed that a few Indian surgeons in the 1980s and 1990s have tried mesmerism (or hypnosis) in surgeries (e.g., tooth extractions, trepanation). Our efforts to locate details of such surgeries in professional journals were in vain.

American psychiatrist David Spiegel (2007) (Stanford University School of Medicine, California) proposes a state of mind, which he describes as 'suspension of disbelief' can influence the mind and body. He avers that altering perception using hypnosis results in brain changes that reduces pain perception. He argues that a valid neurophysiological reason exists to accept that hypnosis is a powerful tool to alter perception of pain and associated anxiety. May be that Spiegel's comment requires some rethinking and reconsideration?

Quizzin'  
with  
Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V. Ramanan's questions are from June 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 relate to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. What colour coding will be required on the front side label of Indian packaged foods to represent high fat, sugar and salt content levels as per Food Safety and Standards Authority(FSSAI) ?
  2. As per the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, how much fine will be imposed for blocking ambulances?
  3. Name the head of the Indian Olympic Association and the world hockey body FIH who has become a member of the International Olympic Committee.
  4. According to the UN report, 'The World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights', in which year will India surpass China as the world's most populous country: 2022, 2025, 2027?
  5. The new Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla is an MP from which State?
  6. On June 17, which Asian nation launched its first satellite 'Ravana-1' into orbit from the ISS?
  7. On which peninsular river is the world's largest multi-stage, multi-purpose Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project built?
  8. On June 23, which famous sporting body celebrated its 125th year of founding with the inauguration of a new HQ building?
  9. Which Indian cueist recently became the only player to win Asian and World championships in all formats in both billiards and snooker?
  10. According to a recent revelation the air strike by the IAF on a terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan, was code-named...?
- \*\*\*
11. Which Chennai resident won the National squash title for a record 17th time recently?
  12. On June 20, which bank founded in the State got the approval from the Competition Commission of India to merge with Indiabulls Housing Finance?
  13. Name the entity started by M. Soundrapandian in 1972 that has been translating and publishing comics from around the world into Tamil.
  14. Name the Sangam era poem from which the FM Nirmala Sitharaman quoted to explain the govt-taxpayer relationship in her budget speech.
  15. Who preceded Udayanidhi Stalin as the DMK Youth Wing president?
  16. Which institution, offering unconditional emotional support to people who are feeling upset, distressed, depressed and suicidal, was started by Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar in April 1986?
  17. Name the State's new Chief Secretary and Director General of Police.
  18. Which respected Chennai institution's in-house magazine is called 'Eyelights'?
  19. What is the height of 'Aththi Varathar' and how long will the idol be in the reclining position?
  20. Name the town where Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer was born, represented by the U in his name.

(Answers on page 8)

# Tamil Journalism

## – A flavour of distinct political leanings

Compared to many other Indian languages, journalism in the Tamil language was rather slow in growth initially. There were not many Tamil newspapers till the end of the 19th Century. The early Tamil journals were non-political and mostly promoted by missionaries who used them as vehicles for proselytising.

The first Tamil journal *Tamil Patrika* (1831), a monthly, was published by the Religious Tract Society. Although it had government support, it did not survive long and closed down after two years. Another journal of the period was *Rajavritti Bodhini* (1885), which specialised in publishing news items translated from newspapers received from England. *Dinavarihamani*, its contemporary, was a weekly edited by Reverend P. Percival and published by the Dravidian Press. It had government support and was reputed to have had a circulation of 1,000 copies, which was considered large in that age.

A British-sponsored publication was *Jana Vinodhini* which captured public imagination by carrying a series on the *Ramayana*. It gave greater importance to literary and educational subjects than to current events and news. *Viveka Vilasam* appeared in 1865 and its main object was to counteract the missionaries' propaganda. It was promoted by non-Christian Tamil scholars. Madras was the home of these journals and it was also the centre from where newspapers in several other regional languages were published. In 1876, nineteen journals were published from Madras (now Chennai) in four languages: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

The first Tamil newspaper in the real sense was the *Swadesamitran* which was started as a weekly in 1882 by G. Subramania Aiyer, who was also one of the founders of *The Hindu*. It became a daily in 1899 and dominated Tamil journalism until 1934. It was a pioneering effort for Subramania Aiyer and very soon he was equally at home in Tamil journalism and in English. The poet and patriot, Subramania Bharati entered the portals of journalism through the *Swadesamitran* where he served as a sub-editor for a short period.

He paid this tribute to Subramania Aiyer in a letter to *The Hindu* from Pondicherry in December, 1914: "Unaided he (Subramania Aiyer) had made Tamil journalism a fact of the world, in spite of his very imperfect early training in Tamil literature. Learn, says the Tamil aphorist, while you are yet young. In Subramania

● by  
Mrinal Chatterjee

Aiyer's youth, he had wholly neglected his mother tongue like most people in this country who claim to have been 'educated' in English schools. But his mature patriotism had to realise later on, that for the elevation of the Tamil race, the Tamil language would be not only the most rational but the indispensable medium. They win who dare; Aiyer dared and he has succeeded in establishing a Tamil daily journal which, with all its faults, is the most useful newspaper in the Tamil country."



G. Subramania Aiyer.



Subramania Bharati.

After Subramania Aiyer, A. Rangaswami Iyengar took over the editorship of the paper. He carried out many improvements in its format and contents and made it very influential in provincial and national politics. The *Swadesamitran* became the mouthpiece of the Congress and it was also the Tamil version of *The Hindu* whose popularity and circulation it shared in fair measure.

However, the man who was its greatest editor and made it a household name was C.R. Srinivasan, who took over from Rangaswami Iyengar in 1928.

His strongest weapon was his editorials in which in simple language and style, he explained to his readers political and economic issues, which until then had remained beyond the cognitive reach of large masses of Tamil readers. In his hands, the *Swadesamitran* proved to be both a teacher and a leader for the Tamil literates whose political consciousness was stirred by its relentless campaign for the social development and political emancipation of the country.

CRS, as he was affectionately known in journalist circles, was a brilliant commentator in English, too. His frequent contribution on men and matters appeared in *The Hindu* and were greatly enjoyed by its readers. The *Swadesamitran* declined after his passing away in 1962 and folded up some years later. It was revived under another owner but did not pick up. The old magic was gone.

In 1917, V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar started a daily, *Desabhaktan*, which had a short life of three years. Its aim was to present a new and refined style in display of news, and one of its editors was the revolutionary V.V.S. Aiyer. It did not have much of an impact. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar's weekly *Navashakti*, which was a political and literary magazine, was an instant success.

Another great name in Tamil journalism during the period was P. Varadarajulu Naidu, who published *Tamil Nadu*, a daily from Madras in 1926. It achieved significant success. Varadarajulu Naidu was a Congressman and an ardent supporter of Annie Besant's Home Rule movement. He carried on a campaign against the Justice Party through his paper and it added to his popularity. Varadarajulu Naidu, however, began to waver in his support to the Congress from 1926 and his critics said he was leaning towards the Hindu Mahasabha.

*Tamil Nadu* closed down in 1930. Some enterprising Congressmen started a paper *India*, in 1931, but it did not make much headway. *Jayabharati*, a tabloid priced at 3 paise, came on the scene and had some initial success. A party newspaper started by the Justice Party was the *Dravida* edited by J.S. Kannappar – (Courtesy: RIND Survey, March 2019).

(To be continued  
next fortnight)



The office of Swadesamitran, now demolished to make way for VGP House on Mount Road.

# Falling in love with Chennai

Friends said, 'Don't go to Chennai. It is hot, humid and anti-Hindi. An engineering college is not the place for an English teacher.'

My village is hot & humid. We are all anti-Hindi, except when we watch a Hindi film, hum Bollywood songs, or talk to fellow passengers on transnational trains. An engineering college may not be a good place for an English teacher, but colleges that do not pay salaries on time are no better.

I joined IIT-M in April 1989, determined to survive its heat and humidity. We got down at Chennai Central station, paid the surcharge for excess baggage and checked into the Taramani Guest House at IIT-M. I had heard some Tamil in Hyderabad, but it wasn't enough to make out why the lady near the guest house did not sell me her bananas, though I had offered her what I thought she had asked for. Only later did my friends tell me that I should not have offered the money with my left hand. People here valued substance, but form mattered too.

Elliott's Beach gave us our first view of infinity. In our first week, we went there daily, sat down on the sand, counted waves and talked about the future. One day a bicycle ran over my daughter's left leg as she was enjoying the waves washing her toes. 'My leg is broken,' she cried in pain. The

cyclist froze in panic. I picked up my daughter, then 10 years old, and came back to the road. There was no vehicle in sight, but luckily for us, a young couple happened to be heading to Velankanni Church in a car. I waved and sought their help, and the young man drove us to the IIT-M Hospital. I gave him a fifty rupee note, 'For petrol', I said.

The IIT-M hospital put us into an ambulance and sent us to the Royapettah Hospital. A Telugu-speaking waiter at the IIT guest house put some money in my pocket, 'You may need it,' he said. I later found that it was Rs. 300/-. I already had a 100-rupee note.. With Rs. 400/- in my pocket, we had enough to re-join a broken leg. I spoke no Tamil, the hospital staff spoke little English and even less Hindi. But the girl's leg was plastered and we were sent back with concern. We brought home words like *Paavam*, *Tamil theriyaadhe*, *Vannakkam*, *Nandri*, etc.

Shouldn't we find a house our own now, somebody in the guest house suggested. A kind soul walked with us to the Dhandeeswaram Nagar and the same evening, we found a one-BHK Flat, without paying any rent in advance. Vegetarians only, we were told! My daughter said *Nandri* and *Vannakkam*. Next morning, we got some minimum furniture on monthly instalment from a nearby shop. We were not asked for a surety.

By the end of the month, we had learnt new words like *kiile*, *mele*, *ulle*, *velle*, *pakatale*, *mumma-di*, *pinnadi*, *aapron*, *aamam*, *illai*, *nalla*, and *namme*, *ninge*, besides numbers and frequent nouns and verbs, like *tanni*, *saapaa-du*, *venum-veda*, *aamaa-illai*, *saapataache*, *poche*, *wandaache*, *waango*, *pongo*, etc. *Pesa/solla* took a little longer. The most helpful were *seri* and *aapadiyaa*. You could start with *vannakkam* and end with *nandri*. And then with *seri* and *aapadiyaa*, we concluded, any conversation in Tamil could be sustained for hours. Excellent fillers! They did not betray your attitude, you remained an uncommitted, yet interested listener.

Suppose the speaker tells you he went with his wife to a movie last night, came back late, got up late, went to the office late and his boss shouted at him. He criticises his boss. Tamil wisdom lies in doing the

plumber, postman, newspaper and milk suppliers was facilitated by the children. We were soon shopping in Tamil and using words like *pooli*, *poond*, *vengaayam*, *vendakkai*, *evlo*, *kaal*, *arai*, *ondre*, *onegaal*, etc.

The bus crew taught us a little Tamil. Hardly anything happened there. But a significant contribution came from auto-rickshaw drivers, that matchless tribe of social workers in Chennai – there were angels among them, who brought back my jacket, glasses, and book; there were also murderers among them. But they were all members of a *Katchhi* (political party), either D.M.K or A.I.A.D.M.K; they were all 'Tamil loyalists' and they all had a *thambi* (younger brother) or *anna* (elder brother) in the police force. Depending upon their mood and the agreed-upon fare (the meter was always in need of 'repair' or 're-setting'), they would either compliment our Tamil or advise us to learn it better. We learnt how to negotiate with them. The demand may be an outrageous fare, say *nuur rupaa* (a hundred rupees) for a trip from IIT to Adyar, or to Saidapet. But you must not lose your temper, 'or you will lose the game', Saraswati, my senior from Hyderabad, said. You can say something on the lines of, *Chennai lo nyayam iliyaa!*, (Is there no fair-play in Chennai?) in a caustic tone, she added. This *mantra* was successful in nine out of ten cases. In the remaining, we learnt phrases like *saavu graaki*, *dongaa* and the like. Sometimes we veered dangerously close to physical assault, but it never happened. Over-speeding auto drivers could be requested to go *medhue* (slow), but the more effective way to control speed was used by the girl, *appa ke bayam irukku* (father is afraid). Later, when we shifted to Taramani, the abode of auto-rickshaw drivers, we had many friends from this group - Ramesh, Siva, Kumar, Senthil, Murugesan, Subbu and many others, who gave us all the joy of having our own private vehicle without any of its hassles! And they added to our vocabulary and confidence.

We proudly displayed our Tamil to visitors from home. They came bound for towns like Kanya Kumari, Rameshwaram, Madurai or institutions like C.M.C Vellore, Sankara Nethralaya, Apollo Hospital, V.I.T Vellore etc. They said *salaai* for *saalai*, or *Chenaai* for *Chennai* and we corrected them. Visitors also made fun of

Tamil – 'It sounds like pebbles rolling in an empty can', they said. Esteem, or its absence, was mutual. Many friends said Hindi sounded like someone was wailing non-stop. Visitors also expected people here to answer them in Hindi. 'Why should they', we asked. 'It is the national language!' 'Who says? And why don't we learn and use Tamil in Bihar?' Some other visitors from home wondered why Chennai wrote 'Sitha' rather than 'Sita'. 'Why do we not distinguish between 'saath' (with) and 'saath' (sixty)?', we asked. We found ourselves defending Tamil and Tamil culture.

We also found ourselves educating our Tamil friends. Maithili is not just the name of a girl, it is also the name of a language spoken by over 40 million people in Mithila, now divided between Bihar and Nepal; it has a written and living literary tradition spanning over 1,000 years. We grow and eat more rice than *chapaatiis*. *Durgapujaa* is also celebrated in Bihar, more traditionally and with greater pomp, etc. We received an appreciative *apadiyaa* (is that so).

It was Amma, who, to us, represented the best in Tamil culture. Milk-white complexion, sharp, proportionate features, draped in cotton and colours, sometimes in nine yards, but mostly in less. She lived in the house opposite and came over to greet us in Hindi the same evening as we moved in. Like God had planted a guide for us in the sub-Saharan deserts, we felt, and began our days with a *darshan* of Venakatachalapathi, filter coffee, *rasam*, *sambhar*, *dosa*, *idlis*, *uthappam* and *bisi bela bath* on an immaculately clean floor untrod by footwear of any kind. The aroma of her filter coffee filled the street, her *dosai* was paper thin, her *idlis* melted in mouth and her *sambhar* and *rasam* tasted like like they were made of *gangajal*.

Then there was Arumugam. He started as a helper at IIT-M with duties in the kitchen of Mrs. Sengupto, the wife of the founding director of IIT-M. In time, he became an accomplished chef, proficient in a variety of fish and other non-vegetarian Bengali dishes. Until he lived, he was the one who prepared mutton biriyani at the South Madras Bengali Cultural Association's Durga Puja and Kali Puja every year. Before Mrs Sengupto moved out of IIT-M, she had Arumugam placed on the salary roll of IIT-M. He was appointed as Technician Grade II in the Dept of Humanities. After over three decades of service, he retired as Technician Grade I. Then he got elected as the chief of his village panchayat.

(To be continued next fortnight)

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needful, no more. Martyrdom is for others. Let's have peace, *dilishwaro waa jagadhishwaro waa*, hail the master of Delhi, hail the master of the world. Your friend's boss could be your boss too, or a by-stander or passer-by could overhear your remarks and report them to your boss and then you might be in unnecessary trouble... Why risk it!

A conversation in Tamil, I learnt, could also begin with *enna samaachaaram*, "What news", and the standard response was, *oname illai*, nothing. It was a wonderful opening move, no bid, no bid all around. You open your cards first, then I will give you a bit of mine too.

Though occupied by foreigners for the better part of its known history, from Telugus to Marathas, from Muslims to Portuguese, French and English, Tamilians have preserved their language, literature, maths, genes, thaiyar saadhams, *veena*, *ghatam* and *naadhaswaram*, thanks to their patience and self-discipline. Give away as much as you must, but no more. There was so much to learn!

The children picked up Tamil more quickly. From school, they brought more Tamil home, especially when they clashed or conspired with their classmates. But there was a difference. The boy had *waa daa*, *po daa*, *somari*, etc; the girl brought in *waango*, *pongo*, etc. Communication with the carpenter, electrician,

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# Memories of an early win at Lord's stadium

"Tatha," my 7 year old cricket-crazy grandson said, "Tell me the story of how you saw the WC 1983. (this was the umpteenth time!) . Everybody, just hear this !" he said turning to his cousins. It was a story, that would assure you of a rapt audience till the very end.... and one I was never tired of narrating.

I was a 37 year old chemical engineer, working in SPIC. Our team of six engineers were sent to Bombay, for the project work of ONGC, URAN. We were stationed in a hotel in Chembur.

It was June 1983! India, the underdogs were playing the semi finals against England, amusing them greatly by their poor performance. But the tides turned and India marched into the last arena, the World Cup finals, surprising the whole cricketing world!

Finals against West Indies- the World Champions, who had won the last two World Cups in 1975 and 1979!

A one-sided game? Or whatever the outcome! How could I miss this! Our hotel in Chembur had a TV but in a small cramped lobby. I was determined to enjoy this eventful match in the best way possible. And what better place than our guest house in Colaba, 35 km away. But distance melted away in the anticipation of good food, great ambience and above all, our guys in the World Cup final !

Of course, no one ever

imagined India stood a chance against the ruling giants! Reaching the finals was thrilling enough! So, off I went to our guest house in Colaba.

India won the toss and chose to bat. But the score they notched up! Only 183 in 54.5 overs! I was quite sure the formidable WI, aiming for a hat trick, would easily reach this total, in much less!

Two wickets down, Viv Richards, the greatest batsman in the world, strode onto the field, in his characteristic style. He alone could reach this small total! The ball went flying all over the field and he steadily notched up 33 off 28 balls. I looked at my watch. The match would be over soon, the way things looked and I would be able to catch my train well ahead of time. I relaxed and sat back.

Madan Lal bowled to Viv Richards, who struck the ball hard, towards mid wicket, over the head of Kapil Dev. Kapil Dev, being an outstanding athlete, ran towards the boundary line, with his back towards the wicket and (as everyone held their breath, eyes wide open) took an unbelievable catch, over his shoulder! VR was out!!! Incredible development! This was the turning point and India, who had no chance, at the start of the game, had some hope to beat West Indies. I had come all the way here to watch, not expecting this totally unexpected turn of events, in India's favour ! Would I, after all, be

missing out on the most exciting part!

The last train to Chembur to my hotel, was scheduled to leave at 11.40 pm from VT. The match was at such an exciting stage that I did not want to miss even a single ball. I decided to stay as long as possible but of course, without also missing the last train. After that, it was edge of the seat viewing !

At 11.20, I had to tear myself away and dash for the station, ten minutes away, by taxi. WI were down for 7 wickets and India had to take 3 more wickets!

I rushed down, all the time wondering what was happening back there and thoroughly disappointed at not being able to see the most crucial part. Jumping into a taxi, I told the driver to zip to the VT station. And lo! Bless him, he had the radio on with the commentary which was sweet music to my ears! Before we reached the station, at 11.35, one more wicket had fallen, leaving WI with two. As I paid him his fare, I excitedly shook hands with him.

I ran to the platform, my head full of "have our boys made it? Are they going to make it?" and to my chagrin, what do I see?! An empty platform with the stationary train! What had happened? How would I get back to my hotel?

Suddenly I saw the TC running in the distance. Sprinting up to him I called out, " TC Saab! Train?!! Signalling to me to follow, he ran to the SM's



Indian team led by Kapil Dev during a reception given to the victorious team that won the World Cup. Picture courtesy: The Hindu.

room. What the — !! It was filled with wide-eyed passengers and the railway staff, all glued to the TV! He then asked, "Arre Bhai ! Pehle World Cup ! Baad mein train !"

Meanwhile, one more wicket fell to the utter delight of the crowd, now fervently praying for the last to go down!

The ball went hurtling out of M Amarnath's hand, felling the last wicket! India had won by 43 runs!! The station erupted in a thunderous cheer! It was euphoria all around!

I had witnessed India's first World Cup 1983 victory, in a different city and in three different unexpected venues!

Guesthouse, Taxi and the Railway station! With the train out there, waiting patiently for this cricket crazy euphoric crowd!

At last the train left at 12 pm, late by 20 minutes. The only time when I was thankful and happy at the delayed departure of a train !!

The next day I read the most inspiring words, which pumped up the team's sagging spirits, by the lion-hearted skipper, Kapil Dev, "Team, if this is not a winning total, it's definitely a fighting total !" Tremendous daredevil confidence, in all its rural sincerity and simplicity.

— Vasanth Manickam

## Answers to Quiz

1. Red, 2. Rs. 10,000, 3. Narinder Batra, 4. 2027, 5. Rajasthan, 6. Sri Lanka, 7. Godavari, 8. International Olympic Committee, 9. Pankaj Advani, 10. Operation Bandar.

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11. Joshna Chinnappa, 12. Lakshmi Vilas Bank, 13. Muthu Comics (now Lion-Muthu Comics), 14. *Purananooru* penned by Pisirandaiyaar, 15. Vellakkoil M.P. Saminathan, 16. Sneha, 17. K. Shanmugam IAS and J.K. Tripathy IAS, 18. Sankara Nethralaya, 19. The 12-foot idol will be in that position for 40 days, 20. Uthamadhanapuram in Thanjavur district.

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