when an economy recedes...

The statistics are all in and the newspapers are full of horror stories. The automotive sector is plunged in gloom owing to near-zero off-take for a variety of reasons. Plant after plant is announcing production cuts, planned maintenance holidays, closure for certain days of the week and above all, layoffs. The impact of this is spreading, as is evident from a prominent biscuit-maker of this is spreading, as is evident from a prominent biscuit-maker announcing job cuts chiefly because their products had bulk sales at auto factories for supply at the cantruns and this demand has come down drastically. The question is, how is Chennai to weather this crisis and what is its impact likely to be?

The city is one of India’s three automotive centres, the other two being Gurugram (Gurgaon that was) and Pune. There are three important clusters here – Oragadam, Maraimalai Nagar and Sriperumbudur-Irongattukottai. Chennai churns out one car every 20 seconds and one commercial vehicle every one-and-a-half minutes. Last year, the State accounted for 45 per cent of India’s vehicle exports and since the Chennai port is the biggest in Tamil Nadu, it would be safe to assume that much of the cargo left from here. However, with export markets not yet shrinking, having been flat for over a year now, the worry is more the near-total domestic collapse. That is pinching Chennai, for apart from the end products it churns out, it also makes around 33 per cent of India’s auto parts.

The immediate fallout has been a cut in jobs. The first to be axed are the contract labourers who, as their categorisation suggests, have no job security. The statistics are not out, and most of those turned away are not speaking, but it appears that the numbers without work may be as much as 10 to 15,000 in each of the three automotive sectors. There has been a sharp drop in the daily wage payable to these workers and it is said that they are desperate to take on any activity to keep the home fires burning. The next major impact will be on the auto ancillaries, of which Tamil Nadu has the highest number in the whole of India. The State also has the highest concentration of medium and small manufacturing enterprises, around 16 per cent of India’s total, with an output of Rs 32,000 crores. Most of these are very badly affected and may soon begin closing down.

This rout of what was till recently a thriving industry will soon have its ripple effect across the city. The real estate sector, which is yet to recover post the demonetisation exercise and the implementation of GST, will be hit hard as many contracted buyers may default on payments owing to a lack of a salary and others will postpone purchase decisions for a time of greater stability. Consumer durables, other than automobiles that is, are at present holding steady but the head of a nationwide chain of retail outlets has predicted that what they can hope for at best is zero growth this year and if the trend continues there could be bad news on this front also. The IT sector is bracing itself for job cuts as the auto debacle hits it eventually. This is a field where there are no unions but talks are already gaining ground on the necessity for such a protective net. Lastly, support services such as cab aggregators and food delivery facilities that have in the recent past seen a huge rise in employment, may also face the heat owing to lack of demand.

It is to be hoped that this recessionary trend is a temporary one and may be reversed, what with the Government announcing various steps. However, it must also be remembered that this is certainly not the first such situation the city has faced and it certainly will not be the last. What is needed is san- guinity to face the crisis, hope for better days and above all, be prepared in future for such trends to recur.

Eco-friendly initiatives on a trial mode for public transport

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC), in collaboration with the Hinduja Group’s automobile company Ashok Leyland, launched Tamil Nadu’s first electric bus in Chennai last month. The bus is operating on route A1, which runs from Thiruvannamalai to Central Railway Station via Mylapore and back. It makes four trips each day, twice in the morning and twice in the evening, with initial fares set at Rs.15. The bus can seat 31 passengers and has standing room for 25 more.

Chennai’s new electric bus runs on battery-swapping technology which allows the vehicle to simply replace its used battery with a fully charged one. A charging station has been set up at Central Depot on Pallavan Salai. The bus also has a whole host of features that look after the passenger’s comfort and safety – apart from air conditioning, the bus is fitted with i-Alert technology which encompasses vehicle tracking, performance monitoring, GPS, a fire detection & suppression system and more.

Interestingly, this isn’t the first attempt to bring electric buses to Chennai; reportedly, the MTC had tried to procure an electric vehicle from Telangana a few years back and was unable to do so for various reasons. The latest attempt comes on the back of a memorandum of understanding that was signed with London-based ‘C-40 Cities Climate Leadership Group’ in March 2018, pledging to phase in zero-emission public transport vehicles in the city. MTC decided to go in for a Chennai-based manufacturer this time.

But they haven’t purchased the electric bus just yet. Ashok Leyland is offering the bus on a trial basis for 3 months, free of cost, while looking after maintenance as well as the charging platform facilities at the depot. (Continued on page 2)
Eco-friendly initiatives

(Continued from page 1)

The company has also provided a trained driver for the trial. In turn, MTC has allotted a bus conductor for the vehicle and picks up the electricity tab of the TNEB.

The 3-month trial will test how an electric bus performs as a mode of public transport in Chennai, with a view to gathering data for scaling operations down the line. Among other things, the trial will measure how long it takes to recharge etc. So far, the bus is able to cover 40 km on a single charge, lasting roughly 2.5 hours. Ashok Leyland and MTC will also be simultaneously testing a different kind of electric bus, a ‘fast-charging’ model. This model can be recharged much the same way that one would with a ‘fast-charging’ model. The charging station is expected to be built in the same way that one would build a ‘fast-charging’ station. The cost of charging the buses is relatively cheaper than buying fuel.

It is heartening to know that eco-friendly public transport solutions are making their way into Chennai – in fact, if TANGEDCO can tap into renewable energy such as solar or wind power to charge the vehicles, it would be fantastic. However, it has to be acknowledged that the solution needs to be practical and scalable, given that the state is looking to expand its fleet of electric buses – the Centre has already allotted 525 buses to TN and another 300 are expected to get further approval.

Of massage messages and the clap

Not a day passes without TNM’s Madras Musings getting one alluring invite or the other to try out massages of the oil, wine and dry variety. Many have their faces involving the use of di-amonds. Full satisfaction and extraction of the last drop is guaranteed, whatever they imply. Some offer a special package for a “body cooling massage.” The billing is done regularly on MMM’s mobile phone and he has in the past, once paid some of them with his readers in this column as well. That was done not with a view to advertise for the service but as a matter of amusement. It is being the sole aim of this column apart from uplift (sorry, wrong use of word here and pun, too).

The number of therapists, all female, keeps varying; the lowest in times of high demand being two (North Indian and South Indian) and now in the recession going up to as many as five. MWM wishes all these girls well and has no intention of calling the numbers given but he does assume that there are people mug enough to establish contact and then lose all their money, credit cards and other valued possessions. After all, if there was no demand, these misses via SMS would have stopped a long time ago. What would they not? Of course, just receiving those messages gave MWM a kind of thrill – he felt wanted and that he had a positive outcome. Perhaps that was the reason for these days cell phones, so the experts inform MWM, are adept at reading your mind and getting you just what you want) that MWM has of late become somewhat more fussy about subscription messages as well. A sample is given below.

You could not focus on a meeting fun with high class female in your city direct meeting offer no fake no cheapness 100% safe & call now Jaya.

Whoever it was that sent this obviously did not attend grammar class or perhaps were previously employed at the telegraph office. The latter is more likely as the messages are always in capital let- ters, the kind that in the past would come home early in the morning with texts like ‘uncle written by 10 p.m. by Yet. However, leaving that aside, MWM has plenty of other queries and he lists them below: Enquiries are closed, right? If so, MWM is unable to locate it in any dictionary and here is an interesting aside. An online search reveals that several before MWM, and no doubt brighter minds, have typed the same search and come away baffled. It remains a frequently typed enquiry and indicates that there are others out there who have been contacted by Jaya or Bindu, the two girls who have, it would appear, been long in service. Secondly, MWM always assumed that such services involved the male half of the transaction paying for the meeting and if so, how does it become an earning proposition?

Lastly, what is implied by safe? Was violence originally contemplated?

These are some of the thoughts that flooded MWM’s mind even as he read these messages surreptitiously, hoping that the kind lady, that is known as She Who Must Be Obeyed did not get to see them. It then transpired that she too gets the messages, MWM and so they are evidently distributed with no bias towards gender, caste or community. This is truly a secular initiative.

Lastly, having probably read what MWM gets, his cell phone presumably alerted certain search engines, which in turn have begun asking MWM if he was interested in massage services from an agency named Urban Clap. Now MWM does not need a dictionary to tell him what ‘the clap’ stood for in the past and so he has decided not to avail of those as well. Just reading the messages is good fun

More Madras Week for Dummies

It is only a fortnight since The Man from Madras Musings put out a set of standard questions he is asked each Madras Week. After it was published, MWM felt that a more appropriate title for that piece would have been Madras Week for Dummies. Since then, Madras Week got over but not the kind of questions that inevitably come in its wake. And so MWM is filing a fresh set for future reference.

1. How is it I never get to know of Madras Week programmes? MWM will never ever have an answer to this one. The events are all booked in advance, on MM and MWM’s social media pages and daily papers did a magnificent job of carrying details of each day’s programme. There is also a website updated practically hourly with very early this by a volunteer. So what more can be done? Next year MWM is seriously thinking of hiring drum-beaters and singers to serenade the people who ask this question.

2. You have said the programmes are open to all. But there are no details of how to get entry passes. Like those Shakespearian characters, MWM usually soliloquises within a whole set of curses but outwardly smiles and replies that there are no entry passes. The standard response on hearing this from MWM is if so, can you tell us where to register?

3. Sir, I have some ideas for Madras Week. How do I get approval from the organisers? Please, there are no organisers of Madras Week and it is meant to be a spontaneoust celebration. So if you have an idea, just go ahead with it. Did you or your ancestors take someone’s permission before you or they opted to settle in this metropolis?

4. Oh to what purpose are these programmes when the city is going to the dogs? It was such a given when I was young. MWM is sure it was and the fact that it has since gone to the dogs means you too were a citizen of the canines that contribut-ed to it, were you not?

5. Should we focus on making Madras Week less elitist and more mass-based? Go ahead, this is where you come in and we look forward to your taking this up in right earnest from the next Madras Week.

SHORT ‘N’ SNAPPY

Some offer a special package for a “body cooling massage.” This billing is done regularly on MWM’s mobile phone and he has in the past, once paid some of them with his readers in this column as well. That was done not with a view to advertise for the service but as a matter of amusement. It is being the sole aim of this column apart from uplift (sorry, wrong use of word here and pun, too).

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A new Madras-centric board game was inaugurated on Madras Day at the Board Room, a cafe for board game enthusiasts at Bhoomma Garden Street, Mylapore.

The new game was curated by theatre personality Krishna Kumar and team. Over 30 teams of two players each, including two 8-year-olds and a couple in their 70s, stayed on till 10 p.m. to play the game that took them to known and less-known landmarks of Chennai. Photo: Krishna Kumar.

The Man from Madras Musings saw this advert on an auto and we thought we would help taking a picture. So there is an auto app for acting drivers. When will we get one for acting drivers? – MWM

MADRAS WEEK SNIPS

Mylapore Food Walk

The Mylapore Food Walk, held as part of the Madras Day celebrations, drew a goodly crowd despite ominous predic-tions of rain.

Led by the ever-enthusiastic Sridhar Venkataraman who held three other Food Walks this August, the foodies assembled at the top end of North Mada Street and explored a few food joints which offer some of the best snacks in this part of the city.

One such place was Senthil’s Soft Zone on Kutchery Road which has expanded because its snacks and drinks have been a big hit with foodies.

Board game on city launched at Mylapore cafe

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Rare photos of ‘old’ Madras

An exhibition of rare pictures of ‘old’ Madras was held till August 31, 2019 at the gallery of the CFP Insti-tute of Indological Research in Alwarpet as part of Madras Week celebrations.
When there was water everywhere

Krupa GE's book 'Rivers Remember' is a painstakingly researched work stemming from the author's horrific experience of the 2015 Chennai floods. Published by Context (an imprint of Westland Publications), the book not only investigates the blunders that effectively doomed the city during the 2015 floods, but also places the disaster within a deeper personal perspective that follows the history of Chennai's water bodies and narrates the story of those affected.

The book opens with an account of the aftermath of the floods in her parents' home. Krupa writes, "Everything looks black, as if someone brought a lorry full of sludge from a gutter and meticulously smeared every single item in the house with it. No piece of furniture is in its place. The gas cylinder has moved out of the kitchen and its place. The gas cylinder has it... No piece of furniture is in place. The gas cylinder has..."

Dr. Bala as 'the worst day of my life,' which itself is at risk today.

"Rivers Remember" is a book that every Chennai vaasi must read – Krupa's fierce love for the city shines through its pages. It provokes the reader to consider what the river's bank contains historical artefacts that date back to between 2BC and 3CE. The narrative style cleverly guides us to view the present with the context of the past; it educates us, for example, that the Kosasthalaiyar reaches the sea via Emmore Creek's backwaters, which itself is at risk today.

One hears that penalties for traffic offences have gone up steeply. A motorcyclist without a helmet is supposed to pay a fine of Rs.1,200 and can have his driving license suspended for three months. But neither the Chennai police nor the motorcyclists here have heard of this law. The heads of Chennai motorcyclists sport thick mops of hair rather than helmets. If our city enforces the law strictly, it could easily net a few crores of rupees every month.

No reasonable person wants others to suffer. But our road terrorists ought to be treated without mercy, much like the terrorists from across the border.

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

September 16-30, 2019

MADRAS MUSINGS

When there was water everywhere
Behind the Scenes at Tamil Nadu’s First Drama Conference

Muthamizh

A ‘vaal’ T.K. Shanmugam was one of Tamil theatre’s biggest benefactors. Born in 1912, his initiation into stage started at the age of 12, when he and his brothers came under the tutelage of the legendary Sankaradas Swaminagil. The siblings would go on to rule the stage over the course of the next four to five decades with their own troupes, the Sri Balasannamkhananda Sabha and later the T.K.S. Nataka Sabha. Shanmugam’s passion for stage went beyond performing and he was involved in several activities aimed at the development of Tamil theatre and its actors. These included running a magazine known as Arivu chukarā exclusively for theatre artists and the founding of the Arun Abhiravnath Sangam, a club based in Madurai where actors could come to discuss their ideas, read magazine and listen to great leaders. One of his biggest initiatives was the organisation of the first ever Tamil theatre conference in 1944.

In his memoirs Enathu Nataka Vazhikkai, T.K. Shanmugam says that the idea for a conference to discuss the problems plaguing Tamil theatre and ways to address them stemmed in 1941 during a discussion with his friend and freedom-fighter Madurai M. Karuppanaiah. Though the idea was good, T.K. Shanmugam writes that finding the time and energy to implement the same amongst his busy theatre commitments was impossible and thus it was shelved. It was revived soon after, when T.N. Sivathanu, the famous ‘Buffoon’ Part actor from his troupe, volunteered to take up the task along with M. Karuppanaiah. The two were appointed Secretaries of the Conference, which was scheduled to be held on February 11, 1944 in Erode.

An Organising Committee comprising several dignitaries from Erode was constituted within a short span of time, including Muslim League Assembly member and former Municipal Chairman Khan Sahib Sheikh Dawood, famous yarn merchant V.V.C.R. Murugesu Mudalail, and N.C. Rajagopal, auditor and founder of N.C. Rajagopal and Co. (a CA firm established in 1925 and headquartered in Chennai). R.K. Venkatasswamy Naicker, the Municipal Chairman of Erode was appointed its chief. The venue chosen was the famous Central Theatre in Erode.

It was decided that the Conference would feature lectures on various aspects of Tamil theatre, spread over morning and evening sessions. Speakers were identified and their participation confirmed. These included the likes of Nawal T.S. Rajamanickam (on the purpose of theatre), P.S. Sivabagayam (on women in theatre), ‘Kalaivanar’ N.S. Krishnan (on the relationship between theatre and cinema), K.A.P. Viswanatham and A.K. Ramalingam (representing the Ceylon Nataka Sabha) as well as the man whose oratory and writing prowess would play an important role in shaping the political discourse of Tamil Nadu, C.N. Annadurai. The flag for the conference was to be hoisted by the legendary Pammal Sambandamudaial, with M.K. Thyaga-raja Bhagavathar presiding over the Opening Ceremony. R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, who would go on to become Independent India’s first Finance Minister, was slated to deliver the opening address. It was also decided that T.K. Shanmugam’s play Aaswārdi would be staged after the conference and that entry to the entire event would be regulated through ticket sales. The two most prominent vaalbaars of Tamil theatre, the portrayals of Sankaradas Swaminagil and M. Kundaswamy Mudalail, would be unveiled on the occasion.

Various drama companies confirmed participation in the event and preparations began in earnest, when the first signs of trouble appeared. An organisation called the Muthamizh Nugarvor Sangam came into existence as soon as advertisements were released about the conference. It had the backing of the town’s most famous son and the State’s most influential political leader, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, whose magazines Viduthalai and Kadairasu supported the new organisation with prominent coverage. Periyar, whose magazine Arivu was considered cinema, plays, devotional concerts and music records to be far worse than ‘toddly shops, harlot, prostitute and courtesan homes and the lot’ of Marvaris and Chettys wrote several editorials in Kadairasu criticising the conference and casting aspersions on its ideology, the TKS Brothers. Left to right: Sankaran, Shanmugam, Bhagavati and Mamatnuwai.

The Organisation Committee met the evening prior to the conference to debate on the various resolutions to be passed during the event. T.K. Shanmugam writes that hundreds of resolutions were proposed. Keeping in tune with its ideology, the Muthamizh Nugarvor Sangam had proposed some harsh ones against mythological plays. It was decided after detailed debate that no proposals would be passed at the conference, given the prevailing situation and that they would be taken up in the next conference after detailed discussion. Lost in this melee were the resolutions proposed by T.K. Shanmugam and his brothers in the genuine interests of Tamil theatre. These included the formation of a separate body for the promotion of Tamil theatre which would take steps such as developing new writers, instituting awards for the best plays and artists, organising theatre conferences and working with various municipalities to create dedicated performance spaces across the State.

The day of the conference dawned amidst great anticipation. Keeping in mind the volatile situation, the welcome rally proposed to be held for R.K. Shanmukham Chetty had in fact even hosted a lunch in its honour. With a week to go for the conference, Periyar left for Salem. Unable to meet him and explain the intentions behind the event, a worried T.K. Shanmugam met Annadurai, who assured him of smooth conduct of the proceedings. The duo shared a great friendship which was strengthened by their shared passion for theatre. Quite coincidentally, in 1943, the inaugural show of Chandrodadayam, Annadurai’s first work as a playwright, was at the same venue where T.K. Shanmugam had performed Sampoorna Ramayanan a day earlier. In a remarkable gesture, T.K. Shanmugam and his troupe members had involved themselves in other preparations for Chandrodadayam.

The Rani from Down Under

Martanda Bairava Tondaiman (1873-1928), ruler of the erstwhile princely state of Pudukkottai. In 1915 he introduced her to his people in Pudukkottai in October 1915. In November of that year, after honeymooning to Hotel Hydro Majestic located in the village Medlow Bath on the Blue Mountains, 110 km south-east of Sydney, their shared passion for theatre. The duo shared a great friendship which was strengthened by their shared passion for theatre. Quite coincidentally, in 1943, the inaugural show of Chandrodadayam, Annadurai’s first work as a playwright, was at the same venue where T.K. Shanmugam had performed Sampoorna Ramayanan a day earlier. In a remarkable gesture, T.K. Shanmugam and his troupe members had involved themselves in other preparations for Chandrodadayam.

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The man in charge of Chandrayaan

The Chandrayaan mission may not have been wholly successful but Dr. K. Sivan and the ISRO team he heads, have come in for high praise. A profile of the man at the helm is most appropriate at this juncture. – The Editor

Sarukkalvili in Kanniyakumari banks in the glory of its most famous son. A humble son of a farmer who studied in its local government-run Tamil medium schools is the head of India’s premier space agency, Dr. K. Sivan who hails from Sarukkalvili in Kanniyakumari district in 1957. He is the first graduate in the family.

Sivan studied in government schools in his native village till the 5th Standard, and completed his schooling in neighbouring Valankumaravalli, all in the Tamil medium. Later, he graduated from S.T. Hindu College in Nagercoil.

He then graduated from the Madras Institute of Technology in aeronautical engineering in 1982 and completed his master’s in aerospace engineering from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, in 1982.

That year he joined ISRO on its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle project, towards which he contributed in mission planning, design, integration and analysis. He has held various responsibilities during his time in ISRO, finally going on to head India’s space agency.

At ISRO, he completed his PhD in aerospace engineering from IIT-Bombay, in 2006.

Dr. Sivan, who has been appointed for a three-year term, is only the second rocket scientist after G. Madhavan Nair to head ISRO.

Sarukkalvili is in the outskirts of Nagercoil. “Take the next right and it is at the end of the road,” says a villager. And as you reach the house, you realise it as unpretentious as the man who grew up there. Dr. Sivan’s sister-in-law Saraswathi lives in the family house with her daughter.

“I was married 30 years ago into this family and at that time he was already working for ISRO in Thiruvananthapuram. He used to live in a lodge then. He would come home for festivals and family functions,” says Saraswathi. “He comes with his family, offers prayers and leaves the same day. When he is with the family he is always smiling and joking. He never calls, but his wife calls regularly and keeps in touch with us,” Saraswathi says.

“He was a class topper from school to college,” says Dr. Sivan’s uncle who lives in the house opposite.

“He was a brilliant student and never went for tuitions or private classes. His father used to pluck mangoes and young Sivan used to go to the market to sell them. He was a helpful child,” the uncle adds.

The school Dr. Sivan studied at is also opposite the family house. The retired PT master there recalls him clearly. “He was five years my junior in school, I remember him as a very quiet boy.”

“I too was five years his junior,” another village piper in. “You know the final exams used to come during harvest time. His father used to be in the field while Sivan sat on the lower branch of a tree with his books, studying, keeping one eye on the harvest, and run if his father called. He was always studying.”

“When Sivan and I were in school we had a very good headmaster,” the villager adds. “That headmaster planted many trees in the school compound and made every class in charge of a few trees. In the morning, when we came to school, the first thing we did was to water the trees and only after that did we attend school.”

“Kanniyakumari is basically an agricultural district,” a village elder points out. “Apart from coir, there is no industry here. We all survive on farming. It has rich fertile soil and there is plenty of water. Paddy, bananas, coconut, mango, rubber is grown here.” “Sivan was exceptional,” he goes on. “While he helped his father in the field he continued studying every free moment.”

“As there was only a primary school here he went to nearby Valankumaravalli for his SSC (Class 10). Those days there was no 12th standard. As there was no bus facility, he walked.”

A colleague from ISRO, who retired a decade ago recalls, “He (Sivan) would go home only to sleep. He is extremely hard-working and totally focused on his work. He was not only the first graduate from his family, he was also the first graduate from his village.” “He is a disciplined taskmaster,” says D. Karthikesan, former director of the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.

“He likes to keep everything on schedule and works with a deadline,” adds Karthikesan. “If he thinks there is a problem somewhere he will go and talk to the people actually working on the project, and never limit himself to seniors in the organisation.” The former ISRO scientist adds, “He is also extremely generous and always looks after the welfare of the people working under him. So people work hard for him. He is a bold decision-maker. Where others may hesitate wondering if it would work or not, he will say it will work and will do it.”

Dr. Sivan has two sons. The elder one has finished his B.Tech, the younger son is in college. The school Dr. Sivan studied in was built over 60 years ago. “We need to pull it down and build another,” says a villager. A government-run school, the land was given free by Dr. Sivan’s uncle.

The village still does not have a bus service. Not does it have a middle, high or higher secondary school.

K. Sivan’s ascent bears an uncanny resemblance to another ISRO scientist who was born in a fishing village in Ramanathapuram, also in Tamil Nadu. That scientist, of course, still went on to become the most beloved President this Republic has had. – (Courtesy: A. Ganesh Nadar / Rediff.com and TCC Digest.)

(Continued from page 4)

called off. The proposed black-flag demonstration too was called off by the perpetrators and it would later transpire that a word from Annadurai was instrumental in it. There were however reports of a few members of the Muthamith Nagavoor Sangam having bought tickets and gaining entry with an intention to disrupt the proceedings during the election of R.K. Shanmukham Chetty as the President of the Conference.

On coming to know of this, he insisted that this be dispensed with, as a mere formality. This threw a spanner in the works of the group, who had sought to use it as a tool to gain attention. When the Conference began and this item on the agenda was not brought up, a handful of them who had assembled, protested against this contravention of convention, only to be shouted down by the large gathering of theatre audience.

The efforts to disrupt the Conference thus turned out to be a damp squib.

The evening session which hosted the lectures was well received by the audience. In his talk titled ‘Kalaiyin Nilamai’ Annadurai made several suggestions for the development of Tamil theatre. He spoke of the need for dedicated theatre auditoriums in all municipalities (following the example of Trichy) and stressed on the importance of keeping artists well remunerated, suggesting the constitution of a limited company in this regard where the shareholders would receive a share of the profits.

He also advocated the use of Tamil stage as an effective means of bringing about social reform. The performance of ‘Aravaiyar’ that followed the conference was a momentous one. T.K. Shanmugam was conferred the honorific ‘Aravai’ by R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, the title that would serve as his primary identity thereafter.

The following week saw two contrasting editorials in the magazines run by the master and his chela. While Kaulanam termed the Conference a total failure, Dravida Nadu spoke of it as a resounding success. For the record, the Conference yielded a net surplus of Rs. 607 against total receipts of Rs. 2,993 and its proceedings were later brought out in the form of a book.

Annadurai’s friendship with T.K. Shanmugam came to the fore once more a couple of months later, when he was instrumental in foiling attempts by Periyar’s followers to hold demonstrations against T.K. Shanmugam’s Sampoorna Rajanayam before the troupe left Erode.
Business and Banking are almost synonymous in the higher strata of financial life today. The current system of providing facilities to businessmen by the banks is of such a flexible nature that it is often exploited by the criminally minded for their personal benefits. There are three categories of such facilities in operation at present, the first being discounting on Bills, the second as Key Loans on stocks deposited, and the third as Over Drafts on running accounts. Of these, the first is the most popular, and innsiderly no interest is charged.

1. What is the Tamil Nadu Govt.'s first church not St. Thomas's? (GI) tag to the which two products?
2. Where did P. V. Sindhu create her ace? 
3. In which Gulf country's capital was Trump pulled out of a spree?
4. Which legendary builder had the agents of his bank? 
5. In a first of its kind, where was the underground bunker museum launched?
6. What World record did the biopic Madras’ first church not St. Thomas’s?
7. Which post office in 1855 was to be called the world’s first underground bunker museum?
8. Donald Trump pulled out of a spree by astronaut Anne McClain.
9. Which globally successful movie was to be called the world’s first underground bunker museum?
10. Which popular superhero will be featured in the world’s first underground bunker museum?
11. What is the Tamil Nadu Govt.'s first church? 
12. What W orld record did the biopic Madras’ first church not St. Thomas’s?
13. Which post office in 1855 was to be called the world’s first underground bunker museum?
14. Which legendary builder had the agents of his bank? 
15. Which globally successful movie was to be called the world’s first underground bunker museum?
16. Contrary to perception, Brit had the agents of his bank? 
17. K. Subrahmanyam is said to have invented the underground bunker museum?
18. Who was the more famous brother in law of Lord Comenara?
19. The only one of its kind in Madras is located on Arathoon Road in Royapuram. What is it?
20. Who was the more famous father-in-law of Lord Comenara?

(Answers on page 8)
Glimpses of Madras Week 2019

The Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz

Students from AMM Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Kotturpuram, Abhijit Aravind, Sai Krishna S and Shreekari S, emerged champions in the 2019 edition of the Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz held on September 7th, 2019. Pranav A. Gautam, Sanjana Bhat and Saadhvi M. from PSBB T. Nagar, were the first runner up while Rishi Rajesh, Kashyap J and Rishi Karthikeyan from PSBB, Nungambakkam, were the second runner-up.

A total of 1488 students from 152 schools across Chennai participated in the written preliminary round, from which 7 teams were shortlisted for the Grand Finale. The quiz was conducted by renowned quizmaster Dr. Navin Jayakumar. The prizes to the finalists were distributed by the chief guest of the day, Mr. S.S. Gopalarathnam, Managing Director, Chola MS General Insurance Company Limited.

Organised by the Murugappa Group as part of the Madras Week celebrations, the 2019 edition of the Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz is in its ninth year in running. It was conducted for the first time in 2011 with 96 teams and steadily grew in size and stature. This edition has seen an increase to a total of 496 teams.

The school children were quizzed on the history and culture of Madras along with a few questions about Murugappa Group. A special round on water conservation was introduced this year. Parents and teachers too walked away with gift hampers for the special audience rounds. The programme was attended by teachers, parents, quizzing enthusiasts and members of the media.

Above: At Fort St. George and below: A special cover of the City's 2nd light house.
The Iconic Hanuman of Kalakshetra

August 2019 has been a merciless month, claiming the lives of outstanding individuals from different walks of life in quick succession. We had barely begun to recover from the death of music director Khayyam, when we were shattered by the passing of another brilliant artist whose impact on dance aesthetics and standards spanned six decades. Veteran Bharatanatyam guru C.K. Balagopalan succumbed to a cardiac arrest at his Chennai home just eleven days before his eightieth birthday on 4th September. He was teaching till the very end. In fact, he was actively rehearsing to perform Kalahasti’s Kanuma Sambhavam at Kalakshetra for their forthcoming December Art Festival.

“Balan Anna” was a dancer and dance teacher I’ve admired ever since I first saw him on stage some forty years ago. It was at what is now called the Rukmini Arangam inside Kalakshetra. It was an open-air theatre at that time, where you sat on the ground to watch the magic wrought by Balagopalan and his dedicated band of colleagues unified by their devotion to their art, Kalakshetra and their ‘Athai’ Rukmini Devi Arundale.

Balagopalan was a magician on stage, mesmerizing succeeding generations of audiences in a wide variety of roles. A tiny little man, thin as a reed, dressed in a simple white shirt or jibba and Palaces sarees, 13. Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee, 14. T Nambe... 8 minutes, 7. She accessed her estranged spouse’s bank account Raj Bhavan, 6. As the longest documentary with a length of 48 hours and even today in his seventies, he and even reared a squirrel and a mongoose as a boy. He once rode a donkey on the beach with disastrous results, as his lifelong friend Dhananjayan remembers. “Balan Anna’s” lifetime commitment to his art re minded me of these words of George Bernard Shaw: “Life is no ‘brief candle’ for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

Answers to Quiz
1. It is the world’s first floating nuclear reactor, 2. Basel (Switzerland), 3. Mannami (Bahrain), 4. Deepa Malik and Bajrang Punia, 5. Below the Raj Bhavan, 6. As the longest documentary with a length of 48 hours and 8 minutes, 7. She accessed her estranged spouse’s bank account from the International Space Station, 8. Buy Greenland!, 9. James Bond, 10. Spiderman.

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