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MADRAS MUSINGS

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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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Digital banners and hoardings soon to return

The political establishment has been feeling lost ever since the High Court of Madras pronounced an outright ban on parties erecting digital banners and hoardings along the streets and roads of Chennai. And as is always the case, a minor adjustment when it comes to interpretation of the judgement will soon help it in getting these public nuisances to be back. If the news agencies are to be believed, the Corporation of Chennai is of the view that the ban pertains only to political parties and not organisers of “marriages, birthdays and other

social celebrations.” We are not sure if religious events also are within the ambit of this interpretation and if so, the Corpo-

● by The Editor

ration has pretty much opened up the city for the putting up of digital banners, flex boards and hoardings.

It was in December 2018 that the High Court of Madras, irked at what it perceived as blatant violation of its earlier judgements, pronounced an outright ban on political parties

putting up banners, boards and hoardings all along the principal thoroughfares of the city on a daily basis. Pedestrians found it next to impossible to negotiate the banners and the poles that held them up, the footpaths were repeatedly dug up to accommodate these temporary structures and motorists were put to risk as the banners blocked line of sight and often came crashing down as well. Political parties were the worst offenders, and they invariably put up banners without seeking police permission, something (Continued on page 6)

TN budget ignores the basics

● by A Special Correspondent

After the introduction of AGST, States have lost the individual power to determine indirect tax rates, except on alcohol and petroleum. When GST stabilises and States become confident of GST as a dependable revenue source, alcohol and petroleum may also pass into the ambit of GST. With the rate of indirect tax revenue thus predetermined, resource management efficacy is the challenge for State Finance Ministers.

The overarching concern is the growing revenue deficit which accounts for about 40-50 per cent of net borrowing (numbers are rounded off for ease of reading). This rise of deficit from Rs. 16,000 crores

in 2016-17 to Rs. 25,000 crores, breaching the budget estimate of Rs. 14,000 crores in 2019-20, is disturbing. The 2019-20 rise is more than the Rs. 4,025 crores of revenue deficit still to be received from the Centre. Consequently, outstanding debt mounts to Rs. 4.56 lakh crores by end of March 21. All this erodes the credibility of fiscal numbers now presented.

The Medium-Term Fiscal Plan lists out assumptions that lead to reduction of revenue deficit to Rs. 11,000 crores by 2022-23. A simple simulation shows that as long as non-discretionary expenditure is raging at 10 per cent or higher than inflation, revenue growth must outdo it by a minimum

12.5 per cent per year from today to neutralise the revenue deficit by 2024-25. If revenue growth is only 10 per cent, expenditure rise must be contained at 5-6 per cent per annum or lower. More need not be said as the tightening fiscal choke is already being discussed widely in the public domain.

As increased revenue is dependent on economic growth, containment of revenue expenditure through stringent priorities and extraction of better results from existing investments is the line to be pursued, apart from better compliance. That calls for a critical examination of the

(Continued on page 2)

HERITAGE WATCH



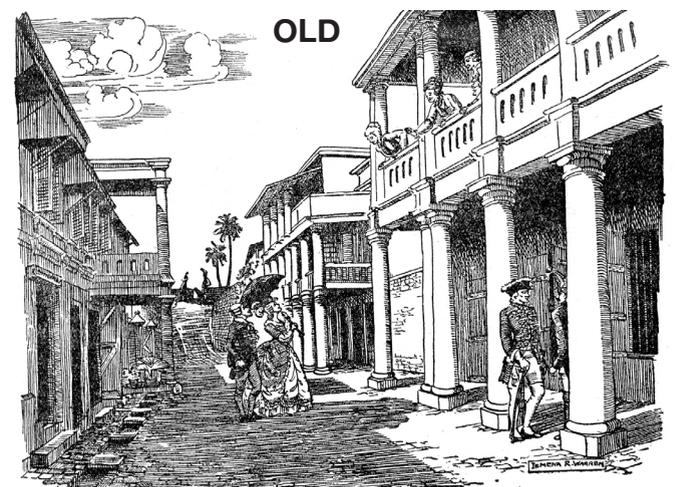
Last days of Last House on Snob's Alley

It has survived from the 1640s, making it one of the oldest surviving buildings in the whole of Chennai city. But Last House to the left of Snob's Alley may be on its last legs if the Archaeological Survey of India has its way.

Listed as being of grade 1 (primary landmark of which no alterations may be permitted) by the High Court of Madras based on the recommendations of the Justice E. Padmanabhan Committee report, Last House gets its name by virtue of being at the end of St. Thomas's Street, Fort St. George (see Know Your Fort, MM Vol. XXV, December 16, 2015). Around ten years ago it was in relatively good condition with clear land around it on which you could walk and reach the eastern ramparts of the Fort. But consistently denied funds for maintenance (it was allocated Rs. 1 lakh in 2014 or so), it is in a decrepit condition and it is reliably learnt that the ASI has recommended that it be removed from the list of protected structures.

It is one of the classic methods of doing away with historic buildings – deny funds for maintenance thereby ensuring a dilapidated appearance and then suggest removal of protected status on the grounds of structural instability based on no or very cursory assessment.

Our OLD is a sketch of Last House as imagined by Ismaena Warren in 1947 for Col. D.M. Reid's *The Story of Fort George*. The New is a photo taken of it in 2015



BUDGET REVIEW

(Continued from page 1)

bill for subsidies and transfers, which is estimated to be at Rs. 94,000 crores compared to previous year's Rs. 82,000 crores. The allocation includes expenditure for various ongoing welfare schemes like food subsidy, power subsidy, scholarships, housing schemes, social security pensions and agricultural loan/interest waiver. A selective reversal of subsidies that have little economic or social impact and minimum voter alienation, could have been carried out to signal the government's concern. In moderate doses over 2-3 years, this approach would have helped in reducing the deficit. However, it is too much to expect the ruling party to have done it, with elections ahead. This should have been done in the last 2-3 years; as it is, the administration has missed the bus. This underlines the importance of a longer-term visionary approach that moves towards development, reconciling electoral inevitabilities and fiscal sustainability.

As regards the fiscal deficit, that it is maintained at 2.84 per cent within the norm of 3 per cent, is not the whole picture. Keeping it within limit is at the cost of a shrinking fiscal space for discretionary expenditure. In value, fiscal deficit has ballooned from Rs. 44,000 crores in 2019-20 to Rs. 59,000 crores in 2020-21. By bigger borrowing and assuming an optimistic estimate of revenue growth at 14 per cent, some elbow room has been created. The Finance Minister has opted for this route to be able to maintain a capital expenditure of Rs. 38,000 crores on projects and schemes. If such expenditure does not lead to give-aways but to building productive infrastructure and development, it could drive growth and increase tax flow.

It is notable that the government has selected some good schemes in the Agriculture and Rural Development sectors. These are: larger devolution to local bodies, encouragement of micro irrigation through capital subsidies, upgradation of irrigation, kudimaramatthu (a traditional practice, but neglected, of keeping tens of thousands of local tanks and water bodies desilted), the Mission on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture (which has a commendable track record of covering 25 lakh acres so far) to cover 7.5 lakh acres more in 2020-21, and the project to establish 8 agro-processing clusters.

The overall Agriculture budget of Rs. 12,000 crores, however, seems relatively small compared to Rs. 34,000 crores for, say, School Education, considering that it is the engine

of growth for the State. The schemes announced, reinforced by the Central Budget's massive allocation and the 16-point approach to agricultural development, might rev up its engine.

On infrastructure, allocation has been raised substantially from Rs. 4500 crores to Rs. 5,500 crores. More importantly, through appropriate legislative amendments, government has introduced a legal arrangement by which landowners can give their land for building infrastructure without losing their right on it and share the benefit of the increased value of the land on account of the infrastructure. This measure is significant for speedier acquisition of land for building bridges and highways reducing implementation time. Imaginative policy changes do not require money and do make a difference to economic impact.

Both School Education and Health have received substantial increases of 18 per cent and 26 per cent. A good part of the former, about 70 per cent, goes for salaries. In School Education particularly, the divergence between output and outcome has been glaring. Tamil Nadu has been topping the lists for infrastructure, but the ground reality is that the teaching standard in government schools is poor due to ill-qualified, untrained and unmotivated teachers. The government could have saved a good part of the additional allocation and focused upon extracting better outcomes from existing infrastructure. We may be pouring more money into an inefficient system needing major repairs.

Chennai city's needs are now to be covered by a billion-dollar World Bank assistance. It covers projects that we have been hearing about for quite some time. These are: Integrated Parking Management, flood mitigation works, comprehensive solid waste management, remediation and reclamation of landfills in Kodungaiyur and Perungudi, a waste-to-energy plant, recycling of sewage for purposes other than drinking and Adyar and Cooum river development including revival of the estuary. Chennai has waited long and wants speedy implementation.

Although individual project selections may be good, meaningful continuity and coherence as part of a vision is missing in the presentation. The Budget should be an unfolding vision, made more interesting with details of outcomes during the year and target dates for completion of proposed projects, instead of being a drab laundry list.

(Im)Mobile technology

Unlike the Chief, whom the Madras from Madras Musings misses on a daily basis, MMM took to cell phones very early. He progressed steadily from pagers to the large brick-sized instruments and the smaller ones. With time cell phones became larger and smarter and MMM kept pace. He can still recall those old days when a cell phone in Madras that is Chennai would not work in Bombay that is Mumbai, the network being different. From such a scenario to now, when life without cell phones can be pretty much impossible (unless you live in Kashmir), we have come a long way. Which is why MMM is unable to handle the poor connectivity that has become a part of daily life. Cannot able to understand is, so MMM believes, the current expression and MMM had he stooped to such a level, would have freely used it.

The service providers are an apologetic lot. They explain that the fall in standards are due to rising demand. The infrastructure is unable to cope with it. But insiders have a different story – the private operators (and there are two in Chennai – Air Fail and Why d'you Phone) are beaten by a third player with global aspirations fueled by a deep pocket that allows for drastically low rates. As a consequence, there is no money for any investment in towers and whatever else that cell phone operators need for the calls to keep happening. Added to this is a fine that runs into several digits slapped on them by the law courts. It is anybody's guess if Air Fail and Why d'you Phone will really survive the latest onslaught. There is an option to go with a Government-run fourth service provider but MMM learns that with their entire technical workforce opting for voluntary retirement, the chances of being better off with it are low.

It is because of this reason that MMM and other cell phone users of his kind find the going tough. Calls now follow a predictable pattern –

Step 1 – You dial a number and there is dead silence after which a beeping sound begins and goes on forever.

Step 2 – You dial the number and a giggling voice tells you that such a number does not exist.

Step 3 – You dial the number again and are told by a different voice that the subscriber is not within network coverage.

Step 4 – You dial the number and finally get through only to find that while you can hear, the party at the other end cannot. After a couple of hellos you ring off.

Step 5 – You try again and get through and surprise, you can actually begin a conversation. But after a couple of min-

utes there is what is termed a call drop and the line goes dead. You then go back to step 1.

MMM thought of switching from Air Fail to Why d'you Phone but was told by users of the latter that they have found it easier to visit the person they intended to call and deliver their message directly. MMM was at his wits end when he read a news item that Chennai is now the pigeon racing capital of India. He has therefore decided to abandon his cell phone and rear a couple of those birds – one for outgoing and the other for incoming messages.

As small as they come

The lower the status of the politician, the more obnoxious his/her behaviour – at least this was what came to the mind of the Man from Madras Musings when he recently happened to travel out of the city by flight and then return after a couple of days by the same mode of travel. On the outward journey there were a

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

few cabinet ministers from the State on the same flight. You could say that their behaviour was exemplary. One of these, once a corporate head honcho, was the life and soul of the flight, mingling with fellow passengers, happily wheeling in his luggage and gamely posing for selfies on landing. The others were more reserved but were models of decorum – they kept to themselves, did not throw their weight about and read newspapers during much of the journey. In short, everything was as it should be.

Contrast this with what happened on the way back. On walking down the tarmac MMM noticed a small group standing near the tail of the aircraft. It appeared as though the crew had gone into a huddle and MMM would have scarcely given a second thought had he not heard raised voices. "Why should I have my boarding pass with me," yelled a stentorian voice. "It is the job of my secretary to carry it." Realising that this was where he got around 400 words for this column MMM decided to look in briefly.

In the centre of the huddled crew was a man in the obligatory political attire – white shirt and dhoti with the standard border. He was

swaying somewhat thereby indicating his spiritually elevated state. He had apparently been caught taking photographs of the aircraft and also some selfies in the process. The ground staff had objected to which he had responded with some colourful expletives. Someone made bold to ask for his boarding pass and found he had none. It then transpired that the precious document was with the secretary who was no doubt the flabby gent who had just arrived on the scene huffing and puffing and brandishing the missing pass. The staff probably decided that discretion was better especially as the flight was shortly to leave. The man was ushered in and he proceeded to express loudly his anger at what he called the rudeness of the ground staff. The secretary tried pacifying him which strangely worked – MMM thought this would result in yet another explosion.

All went well during the actual flight apart from a demand for 'hord drinks' which of course was courteously refused. The next part of the drama unfolded shortly after landing was announced. The secretary having shut his eyes for forty winks, our man decided it was time to get up and wait near the door so that he would be the first to leave. Fortunately for all, the sleeping secretary woke up in time and dragged the master back. Act III was when the flight actually landed but was still taxiing on the runway. The man got up, collected his bag and bounded to the door. It was all that the airhostesses could do to get him to go back to his seat. He was not happy. Did they not know who he was he thundered. MMM too wondered. It transpired he was some kind of office-holder at the district level.

Tailpiece

Wandering far and wide in his travels around the State, the Man from Madras Musings came across this interesting toilet sign. It did give some food for thought even as people went about their business.



– MMM

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



Setting the record straight

Notice my Nadkarni piece last fortnight has drawn a lot of comment in the latest issue of MM. However there are factual errors in Mr. Arumugham's letter. The incident that is referred to – about several English players not in a position to take the field because of illness – happened in the next test at Bombay. He refers to Kripal Singh as a substitute fielder which obviously he could not have been at Madras since he

was in the playing eleven. At Bombay, Kripal did, in fact, field for England as they did not have even eleven players for fielding, but did not take a catch to dismiss an Indian batsman. Just to set the record right.

Partab Ramchand

The Palkhiwala I Know

I met Mr. Palkhiwala on quite a few occasions to consult him on income tax matters when I was in practice as a Chartered Accountant. I shall

send my experiences with him separately.

After going through the first instalment from Mr. T.S. Gopal's book, I would like to add something as to what happened in the meeting when Cho presided. Cho started his speech stating that every one in the audience knew Mr Palkhiwala but many of them may not know Cho. It was a great honour for him to preside over the meeting. Having said that, he shared his views expressed by many great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and others to the effect that private enterprise should be put down and only public enterprise should be encouraged. There were many puzzled faces in the audience but nobody said anything. After waiting for about 30 seconds Cho stated that none of the great leaders ever said anything like that. He asked, "Why is it no one objected to what I stated and did not get up to say, Cho you are talking drivel?" He explained that it is because of the fact that he is stating something from the dias. After apologising for the demonstration, he said that if educated persons like us do not object to such statements, how can we blame the general public consisting of many illiterates for believing whatever is stated by politicians, especially during election time? There was a total silence among the audience for a few seconds which was followed by a thunderous applause.

Even today after four-decades politicians do get away with lot of untruth in their speeches.

G.V. Raman
Executive Chairman
Shriram Group

Taxing times

This refers to the report *Time to end the property tax mess* (MM, Feb 16-29).

While it is true that the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has not revised the property tax for the past 20 years, it doesn't mean that it can effect a steep revision. It is like force-feeding a person who had not eaten for days together. No doubt, periodical revision is must; but to compensate for its inaction, GCC cannot resort to steep increase.

Whilst on this, besides the general revision in the tax effected for the period 2018-19, which has since been withheld by the government, a revision was effected for the period 2017-18, in respect of properties which was based on the usage of the property from that of owner-occupied to tenanted. The GCC stated that it conducted a survey to ascertain the details on a pilot basis in two zones. It was a mystery because no owner had

Vertical Horizontal

(In these troubled times, this poem by Geeta is most apt – The Editor)

We Hindus
wear our stripes and spots
on our bodies, foreheads, arms;
Clearly visible
to alert other peoples
tribes and castes
not to bother knocking.
We won't offer that glass
of water.

We Jains
on the other hand
cover our mouths and noses
to ward off bird hits, insects
smells and impious words;
Remove each body hair
from crown and crevice
by hand, diligently
leaving it to others to
clean and clear
our marbled citadels
of purity.

We Muslims
blend and weave ourselves;
hide our thoughts under
caps of felt or fur
from the unborn fetuses
of Karakul lambs.
Take refuge behind word and book;
Bend our heads five times
to touch the ground;
Wield our piety in black
on our foreheads, the backs
of women.

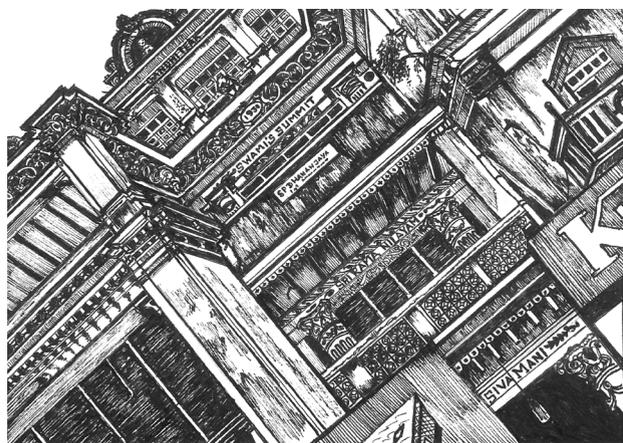
We Christians
bend the rules;
Command others to give up
their multi-armed gods
while we taste the wafer
of love, drink from his blood;
Making it a civilizational mission
to torch ancient histories and ivoried city walls
holding a Cross that is both
vertical and horizontal.
Nobody wins.

Note: Inspired by a remark made by a Hindu friend explaining how different he was from an equally Hindu friend: "I am vertical. He is horizontal".

– Geeta Doctor

● Pavithra's Perspective

The House where Netaji stayed



One of the endearing side-effects of my re-discovery of Chennai's heritage was the many cabbies I befriended, who overrode their skepticism of my history trails to actively become interested in my quests to find this or that unfamiliar site. What usually started out as outraged curiosity ("I have been a driver for x years; how can there be a place I do not know?") often transformed into genuine astonishment ("I never knew this place existed!") and later, intrigued conversation. Sometimes, it even led to them taking over the quest.

Cab Driver: Madam, if you trust me, I will take you to a history place.

Me (tantalized, but also suspicious): Which place is this? Which area?

Cab Driver: Surprise, Madam.

I'd already been driving with him for five hours and so trusted him – but this was still unknown territory. I gave him the benefit of doubt, however, and he proved himself by driving straight to Pycrofts Road in Thiruvallikkeni, stopping in front of an imposing structure, and pointing with a flourish: "Nethaji stayed in this house only."

Eventually, I would discover that Nethaji Subash Chandra Bose, invited by Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar, did indeed stay in this very house named "Gandhi Peak" on September 3, 4 and 5 in 1939; and that he repeated his stay on January 10 and 11 in 1940. I also learnt that the building had been marked for demolition and that if I needed to record its beautiful symmetry the way I intended, I'd have to do it quickly. Which I did, to great satisfaction.

Details about the miniature: Black and White; Pen and Ink. Dimensions: Approximately: 5.5" X 2.5"

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

any clue about the same. The survey was full of errors in that even the properties occupied by owners had been classified as tenanted much to their chagrin, and tax revised. Thus, it was a double whammy for some of the property owners.

Though tax is revised to make available various facilities to the public, in effect, we don't get the same. One does not have to dwell at length as to the condition of the storm water drains. The GCC's way

of relaying the roads is equally questionable. Most of the apartments in various streets face inundation during rainy season in view of the road level going up each time the road is re-laid.

Notwithstanding the reason stated as above, no one faults the need to revise. What, however, is to be noted, is that the change effected, should not make a big dent in the pocket.

V.S. Jayaraman
31, Motilal Street
Chennai 600 017

When Madras clothed the Army

Among my favourite research materials are the old street directories of Madras that is Chennai. From these you can get a fairly good idea of street names, the names of thoroughfares to which they linked up and also, if you are really lucky, the details of some landmark buildings that stood on them. A recent perusal had me scratching my head about ACD Street. The directory, dating to the 1930s, was not very helpful – the street branched off Mount Road and terminated in a cul de sac. A look at Eicher's Street Directory did not show any such thoroughfare. For all practical purposes, I had, like ACD Street, wound up in a dead end.

Not having given up, I looked up other sources and soon found that ACD stood for Army Clothing Depot. That led me on a long trail of when Madras was one of the principal sources for supplying army uniforms. The earliest reference dated to 1809, when T. Boles, formerly Deputy Adjutant General and suspended from service for transgressions unknown, requested that he be allowed to return to England and that "the agency for army clothing, for the purpose of completing the year's clothing now on hand," may please be handed over to his brother, Lt. Boles of the 9th Native Regiment. It is not clear if the authorities acceded to the request but it appears that early in the 19th Century, army clothing was sub-contracted to Company officials.

Within a few decades, the three Presidencies had their respective army clothing depots and from the records, it is possible to glean that the one in Alipore, Calcutta, was opened in 1852. Probably the facility in

Madras too dates to the same time. Post the Crown taking over the administration of India in the late 1850s, matters appear to have become more streamlined. The city had an Army Clothing Department, and as per *Standing Information Regarding the Official Administration of the Madras Presidency* (1877), supplied "the whole of the Madras Army, European and Native. The material is obtained from England and is made up under contract by native workmen." It is evident that by this time, apart from tendering out much of its requirements, the clothing department was also into producing garments. The same article noted the extensive use of sewing machines in the premises. By 1879, all three Presidencies had full-fledged sewing facilities.

Director of Army Clothing and all the locations reported to him.

It is not clear as to when the Bombay facility closed but by the first decade of the 20th Century, the Alipore and Madras units were the sources of all army clothing and produced around 40,000 garments per month. This was to rise sharply during the First World War, when the two units together, along with a newer facility inaugurated in Shahjahanpur, made available over 42 lakh garments and 22 lakh pairs of boots. By then, the Army Clothing Factory in Madras had moved out of the Mint into newer premises on Mount Road, this shift happening in 1912.

The Indian Empire Royal Book of that year gives some idea of

an officer of the Army Clothing Department led the raid and found 20 bales of canvas in a well at the rear of the shop. Earlier in the day, a brougham with 88 flannel shirts, all with army markings (a broad arrow followed by an M for Madras), was stopped near Neil's Statue and taken to the police station opposite Spencer's. A subsequent stock-taking at the factory revealed that the shirts were part of a consignment meant for locations in western India.

During interrogation, Smith confessed that he was hand in glove with some tailors in the factory but hesitated in revealing their names as that would mean exposing "clerks, Muhammadans and guard peons." Clearly it was quite a long-standing racket

potential for expansion and there was speculation that the others would be closed in its favour, this being considered even a subject worthy of a backbencher's question in the House of Commons. By 1924, this became reality and the Madras unit fell silent. There were frequent talks of its revival but all of it came to nought.

In 1934, the Office of the Inspector General of Prisons shifted from Ootacamund to Madras and was housed in the premises of the Army Clothing Factory, but complaints were rife about the building and its unsuitability.

The Second World War saw a sharp rise in demand for army clothing and in 1940, the Army Clothing Factory in Madras was reopened. The new facility was at the workshops of the Madras and Southern Mahratta (M&S) Railway, Perambur, the land on which the loco works now stands. This was one of a chain of several clothing factories, all of them on railway land – the others being in Agra, Lahore, Delhi, Secunderabad and Calcutta. Post the war, all of these were closed, the Shahjahanpur unit being the sole survivor and by then, given the status of an Ordnance Clothing Factory. In 1961, a second such facility was inaugurated in Avadi, Madras and till date manufactures combat shirts and jackets, trousers, tents, disposable shirts and parachutes.

What of the Mount Road premises in the meanwhile? The Inspector General of Prisons having moved out in the 1940s, the building was acquired by the Madras Electric Supply. This became the head office and survived into the 1990s when it was finally demolished to make way for a brand new (and quite ugly) office block for the TNEB. It was thanks to this that I discovered where the Army Clothing Factory once was. It was inside a lane that is between Rayala Towers and Addisons & Co. The factory was therefore on historical land – it occupied the space between the erstwhile Eastern and Western Castles of Thomas Fiott de Havilland, those two structures having given way to Rayala Towers and Addisons.

In those days, papers could not afford the luxury of a network of their own correspondents in important centres gathering news. News was retailed by Reuters and Press Trust of India to newspapers, and this centrally-fed news formed the main body of papers. As such, the commonness of content was due to the sameness of the source, but that did not make one paper a translation of the other.

Electricity Board Avenue leads to the TNEB (now Tangedco) building. This clearly was the ACD Street that originally set me off on this trail. And there is added proof at the blind end – a lovely army bungalow set in a large garden and occupied by a senior officer. It is most unexpected and is a thing of beauty in an incongruous setting. But then Chennai is full of surprises like that.

Rise of early Tamil newspapers through the Swadesamitran prism

The article by Mrinal Chatterjee on Tamil journals in the MM, July 16-31, 2019, which made references to *Swadesamitran*, evokes more memories of this once-leading newspaper of its time. In a literal sense, *Swadesamitran* meant 'Friend of the Country'. True to its name, the paper espoused the cause of freedom from British Rule. A pioneer among language newspapers, its experiences reflect the rise of language journalism in South India.

Swadesamitran was established in 1882, a few years after the likes of *Times of India* (1861), *The Hindu* (1878) and *Civil & Military Gazette* (1872) – the last one was published from Lahore with Rudyard Kipling as editor. *Swadesamitran* was known endearingly as *Mitran*. It was perhaps among the oldest vernacular dailies in Asia. *Mitran* was owned, at the time of our story, by C.R. Srinivasan. Under him, the paper continued the tradition set by earlier illustrious Editors. The paper was sought after by Tamils settled in Ceylon, Malaya and Burma. The poet Subramania Bharathy was sub-editor for the paper for some time.

In the early days, A. Rangaswami Ayyangar served as the Editor to both *The Hindu* and *Swadesamitran*. He can be recognised in the historic photo of the Round Table Conference in London along with Gandhiji, wearing a white turban in the south Indian style. A. Rangaswami Ayyangar and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar were brothers. The latter was Diwan of Kashmir and later, a member of the Nehru Cabinet handling Kashmir affairs. C.R. Srinivasan, who took over *Mitran*, was their nephew.

Chatterjee says that during the Rangaswami Ayyangar days, *Swadesamitran* was 'a Tamil version of *The Hindu*'. In those days, papers could not afford the luxury of a network of their own correspondents in important centres gathering news. News was retailed by Reuters and Press Trust of India to newspapers, and this centrally-fed news formed the main body of papers. As such, the commonness of content was due to the sameness of the source, but that did not make one paper a translation of the other.

Each paper established its uniqueness with editorials and special columns – today, the papers also leverage 'inside news' gathered by their own correspondents. It was said that there

were occasions of Tamil editorials of Rangaswami Ayyangar in English in *The Hindu*. After Rangaswami Ayyangar, the two papers assumed their independent identities.

The editorial office and press were accommodated there. Financially, language papers were not doing as well as English ones, as the newspaper reading habit was more prevalent among the elite who took to papers like *The Hindu*, *Madras Mail*, *Times of India* and *Statesman*. The section that read Tamil papers comprised of housewives and rural families. Those wanting to read a newspaper had to go to the nearest pan shop to pick up a copy. As such, there was no mass retail distribution as in present times. Circulation was limited and, consequently, advertising income was meagre and financial viability, fragile.

World War II, Independence and industrial growth brought about big changes. The high tide of this period lifted all boats including those of the language



C.R. Srinivasan – Proprietor and Editor, Swadesamitran.

papers. Progression from a small base was overwhelming for language papers as compared to English papers, that were already used to a relatively larger circulation. *Mitran* found itself having to cater, suddenly, to a large, news-hungry reading public comprising industrial workers, white collar employees, middle class families, home making women and emerging youth.

By then C.R. Srinivasan, known as C.R.S, had become the Managing Editor, holding the controlling shares of *Mitran*. His son C.S. Narasimhan was a rank-holder with Honours in Economics. He kept up with brilliant fellow students like V.K.



The entrance to Swadesamitran.

Ramaswamy and S. Narasimhan, who rose to the position of Finance Secretary in the central government. When he joined *Mitran*, it gave C.R.S the confidence to invest in modernising the production and distribution of the paper. Adapting itself to new opportunities, *Mitran's* daily version provided news of the world, country and province, while the weekly version

and canteen, there was still space that could be rented out. This space was earmarked on the western side facing Mount Road. This portion was ideal for glass show cases for the public to enjoy window shopping using the covered walking path. This space was in a prime location in the city and the glass-fronted display cases were ideal for showcasing electronic items

was fond of saying that newspaper delayed was wastepaper. News in the new age had become a highly perishable commodity. Newspaper production and distribution arrangements had to address the challenge of delivering news before it became stale.

On the production side, the problem was that Tamil characters had to be hand-composed letter by letter for the day's paper. There were far larger number of letters in Tamil and many variants too, in combination with vowels.

Proof reading was equally painful and time consuming. This long lead in getting the day's paper ready and into the hands of the reader in time meant that the paper was behind events and not up to date when it was delivered. C.R.S was not the inventor of the new streamlined letters with additive signs for vowelizing consonants, but he was the one that found that such an ingenious simplification could be adapted to Lino typing machines. This measure speeded up the composing process in line with English papers. There was hesitation among his senior colleagues who feared that the reading public would be put off by the new forms of characters and would stop buying the paper. C.R.S said the paper would perish if it stuck to the conventional style if it cannot provide the latest news.

Acquiring *Victory House* was made necessary and possible by the rising demand for language papers in urban and interior areas, and even from Tamil residents in Malaya, Singapore and Ceylon. Moving into *Victory House* marked the coming of age of local language newspapers playing on even terms with the English Press.

C.R.S realised that news should reach people at the soonest and

● by N.S. Parthasarathy

(To be continued next fortnight)

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

– SRIRAM V

The Madras factory was located in the old Mint Buildings, Black Town, which is where the Government Stationery Press now functions from, at the northern end of Mint Street. The address is given out rather quaintly as Late Mint, Black Town, Madras. There was, however, soon talk of rationalising the various functions of the three Presidency armies, an essential step towards the formation of a pan-Indian force. By the 1880s, efforts in this direction had been stepped up and the clothing agencies across the three Presidencies were centralised. Calcutta was where the

the organisation of the factory. A Superintendent of the rank of major was in-charge with an Assistant Superintendent under him. Further down were a Head Clerk and a Head Accountant (both Indians), an In-Charge of Supply, an Auditor, a Master Tailors, an Overseer in charge of Packing, and Storekeepers.

It was while at Mount Road that the factory made it to the news for all the wrong reasons. On July 31, 1917, a search was made at the premises of E.D. Smith, a tailor doing business on Mount Road. Captain Philips,

that had been exposed and the trial at the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court ended in conviction, which was upheld on appeal by Justice Ayling in the High Court of Madras.

By 1922, the army had four clothing factories – Shahjahanpur, Alipore (Calcutta), Patna and Madras. Of these, the last-named employed the maximum numbers – 1,246, as opposed to Shahjahanpur's 1,073, the other two stations having a payroll at less than 500. However, it was clear even then that the Shahjahanpur unit was the one that was looked upon as being with



The spelling is enough food for thought but the history of this thoroughfare is even more interesting.

Nani Palkhivala in Madras – IV

(Continued from last fortnight)

When Palkhivala was annoyed with me

My recollections of Palkhivala in Madras also include the memory of an exceptional occasion when he was annoyed with me. At the first Rajaji Memorial Lecture he delivered under the auspices of the Mylapore Academy, his bio-data was read out while he was introduced as the speaker. It disclosed biographical information relating to his early life which, out of modesty, he preferred not to publicise. Under the impression that I had shared all that information with the Academy, he was furious with me. Only when the organisers told him that they got it from some other source did his annoyance with me abate.

The first G.L. Mehta Memorial Lecture (1975)

The Institute for Financial Management and Research invited him to deliver the first G.L. Mehta Memorial Lecture in Madras on 4th January 1975. They wanted to hold the event at the Taj hotel and asked me to assist them in making the necessary arrangements. I enquired if the public were free to attend and advised them that if it were otherwise then the Taj might not be the appropriate venue. They replied that attendance was to be by invitation only and they did not expect to see a large crowd. I conveyed this matter to Palkhivala. He then asked his P.A. to tell the organisers that he did not wish to give the lecture at the Taj because he wanted it to be a public speech. He preferred to address the common citizens of Madras and not just a few elite invitees. He suggested Abbots-

bury as the preferred venue; he had grown fond of it lately. The Institute then decided to hold the event at Abbotsbury but they doubted if the hall would get filled. The evening of the event arrived, and the crowd overflowed the hall!

Busy practitioner

My recollections of Palkhivala also include memories of his clients trying to meet him for professional advice or assistance when he visited Madras for giving speeches. He was so busy that he would hardly find time to meet them. He would also leave immediately for the airport after the speech to catch the return flight to Bombay. On one occasion, a client was insistent because of the urgency in the matter and his local advocate sought my help. I informed Palkhivala of the matter and he agreed to meet the client at the airport for a few minutes if the flight was delayed. Fortunately for the client, the flight got delayed that day!

On another occasion, Palkhivala appeared before a Tribunal in Madras and, after giving a speech at a venue, left for the airport. One of the members of the Tribunal, who was a personal friend of mine, told me, "You may inform Mr. Palkhivala informally that he has won the case and wait for the formal communication tomorrow." I gave Palkhivala the good news at the airport. In a child-like manner he was surprised and happy to hear it.

A piece of information that made the rounds in those days was that Air India – Palkhivala was its legal advisor – ensured that the seat next to him in a flight in which he was travelling was left vacant so that he could grab some sleep, because

usually he would be pestered by the passenger sitting next to him. Whether this was a fact or merely a rumour I do not know, but I wonder if it would be an exaggeration to liken his popularity to that of a movie star!

A fond personal recollection

A fond personal recollection comes from 1998, when he acceded to my request and gifted me the precious eleven volume set of Will and Ariel Durant's celebrated work, *The Story of Civilization*, from his collection. During our phone conversation, he apologised with characteristic humility that he was unable to write and sign on each volume. He dictated and signed below the following words in the first volume called

● by
T.S. Gopal

The Oriental Heritage:
For,
Mr. T. S. Gopal,

In appreciation of your services to the Forum of Free Enterprise, and to public causes.

He also arranged to have the set packed in a box at his office in Mumbai and, having paid for the parcel charges himself, directed his P.A. to check with me if I had received it!

His last visit to Chennai

The last time I saw him was during his last visit to Chennai. That was on 4th February 2000 when he came to Chennai to receive the honorary doctorate conferred by the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE). On that memorable occasion, MAHE honoured Palkhivala, C. Subramaniam



L to R: T.S. Gopal Secretary, Forum of Free Enterprise Madras, Nani Palkhivala and M.R. Pai, Secretary, Forum of Free Enterprise, Bombay.

and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with doctorates for noteworthy contributions in their respective fields.

Earlier that day, Palkhivala, who was suffering from persistent ill-health, felt unsure if he would be able to travel from Mumbai to accept the honour. At 2 p.m., I got a call from Mumbai that he wanted to be present at the event and he would be accompanied by a nurse. I was asked to look after his needs at the venue. He arrived at the venue ahead of the scheduled time for the start of the event. His physical condition was in such a poor state that he could barely talk or walk. I took him to the wash room. After he had freshened up, he was put up for a while in a small room in the same premises as the auditorium in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Chennai centre, which was the venue. The nurse who had accompanied him made a failed attempt at the last minute to make him wear a tie. We then wheeled him into the auditorium and helped him climb the stage.

While encomiums were paid that evening, Palkhivala's ill-health prevented him from properly comprehending them or responding. It was sad to see that the man who used to move thousands with his speeches had to struggle to move his limbs and utter the words that did not come out coherently. This tinged the occasion that was otherwise a happy one with melancholy. Many had assembled in that hall with the fond hope of hearing him but that was not to be. When the

function ended, I helped him get into the car. The car drove away and I saw him no more.

A couple of years later the sad news of his passing came. Today, in Chennai, the Nani Palkhivala Foundation and the Nani Palkhivala Arbitration Centre in Mylapore, and the buildings in the Sankara Nethralaya campus on College Road, named after him and his wife, perpetuate his memory.

Conclusion

The fragrance of the many memories lingers in my mind. It was a pleasure and an honour to have known him. Although I am reminded of Will Durant's words, "with as much modesty as my inherent immodesty would permit", I will not dissemble the pride of having been associated, though in my own little way, with Palkhivala for many years. The pleasant exercise of sharing these recollections had transported me in my mind across a few past decades to hear his speeches laced with mordant wit and sprinkled with apt quotations and the tumults of applause that greeted him whenever he spoke in Madras.

Many times when I felt reminiscent, I have heard the audio recording of the 1971 speech at Bertram Hall. I cannot help feeling nostalgic whenever I hear the sound of his voice and Rajaji's. It is a heart-warming feeling that many people in Chennai associate me with Palkhivala in their memory. Money cannot buy but only passion for a cause can bestow so great an honour.

(Concluded)

Return of digital banners and hoardings soon

(Continued from page 1)

that the law enforces chose to turn a blind eye on. This is why most public interest litigations filed in this matter focused on the role of political parties. The judgement too concerned these.

But the other offenders in this regard are not any less – organisers of weddings, birthdays, coming-of-age ceremonies and religious events. They too tend to block off road access and put walkers and motorists at risk. In this context it would have perhaps been better if the court order had included these latter groups as well. That the ban did not have much of an effect in reality made itself manifest in September 2019 when a woman riding a two-wheeler

was killed when she hit a flex board. There was a hue and cry on media -social and otherwise. The Government dawdled over arresting the offenders and oh, by the way, these men though belonging to the ruling party, had actually put up a hoarding for a family celebration.

Within a month of this horrendous occurrence, the Government took its first steps in surreptitiously relaxing the ban on digital banners. The Prime Minister was coming to Mamalapuram to meet the Chinese President and the authorities appealed to the Court that they be allowed to put up digital banners to welcome the dignitaries, this being the 'traditional greeting' we as Tamils extend visitors. The Court agreed and

banners were put up. Since then you do see the odd hoarding going up – local political bosses have a way with the local police force. Some places more or less have permanent banners as well, though these are a lot less.

The latest relaxation, to allow banners for social occasions does not augur well. Most events of this kind, and this includes religious ones, have political undercurrents and so all parties will now take this route to erect banners and hoardings. They will conveniently take shelter under the so-called non-political nature of the event and justify the usage of banners. Everyone will be happy, all except the actual users of the road and they don't really matter do they?

Profile of an architect

Sheila Sri Prakash of Shilpa Architects Planners Designers is one of India's leading architects. In fact, she is counted among the most influential female architects in the world today. She has completed several architectural projects, many of which are known for their designs inspired by local arts, culture and heritage. She is also reputed for her work in designing energy-efficient buildings.

Interestingly, Sheila almost did not make it to the world of architecture – she was denied admission to the Anna University School of architecture in 1972. Armed with excellent marks in the pre-university degree from Stella Maris College, she went to the School of Architecture seeking admission. A professor in the interview panel, obviously a male chauvinist, told her, 'You have all the qualifications for this course, but why do you want to deprive a boy from getting a career?' Though shocked beyond words at the gender bias of the gentleman, her father, an ex-army man who had been a great source of support to his only child, used his good offices to secure her admission in the prestigious college.

Again, Architecture was not her first choice as a career. Her first love was classical dancing in which she was trained from the age of 3. She performed her Arangetram at the age of 6 years in Bombay. The chief guest at the Arangetram declared her 'a child prodigy'. It was then that her father decided to shift base to Chennai where Sheila could get the best training in dancing. Her mother was a big force behind her foray into dancing and other creative pursuits, ensuring that she was trained by the best masters in the art. She learnt Kuchipudi, Mohini Attam and Odissi apart from playing the Veena and painting. After training under the famous dance maestro Dhandayudhan Pillai, she even had



her second Arangetram when she was nine and started giving public performances. She was well on her way to a career in dancing. An offer for a role in a movie as a heroine followed, which she refused because by that time the architecture bug had caught her. Why architecture?

'I was good in science subjects in Rosary Matriculation School & during college days. I found out that Architecture provided an opportunity to combine my creative abilities with my interest in science and maths' she says.

So she plunged into the course with all the commitment she is famous for. Cupid intervened when she was in her third year in college, where she met Sri Prakash, a gentleman three years her senior who was doing a course in Chemical Engineering at ACTECH at the same campus. As soon as Sri Prakash completed his degree and joined L & T as a Management trainee, they decided to tie the proverbial knot with full blessings from both sets of parents. Their marriage was held in 1974 - Prakash was 22 and Sheila was only 18.

● by R.V. Rajan
rvrajan42@gmail.com

'While I was willing to give up my love for architecture for my soulmate, it was Sri who insisted that I must finish the course. He was a pillar of support to me all my life, so much so that he gave up a very promising career at L& T to be with me, lending me his shoulder in all my initiatives. I would not have achieved whatever I have achieved in life but for Sri and his unflinching faith in me'. Sheila became emotional when saying this because she lost her life partner of over 40 years last year to cancer.

'By the time I had to face the final exams, I was pregnant. Bhargav, my first born, came into the world just two days before the final exams. I, however, appeared for the exam and just managed to pass the exams to get my B.Arch degree in 1977. I was now ready to start my life as an architect' said Sheila.

After spending two years with Karpur Associates where she felt constrained, Sheila decided to become an entrepreneur. Shilpa Architects was started in 1979 with the office located in her own home at Gandhi Nagar. When she wanted to build her office in

the spacious compound of the house, her father gave her permission subject to her ensuring that none of the trees in the compound were felled.

Sheila says, 'I accepted the challenge. I built four modules around the trees with total office space of 400 square feet. The cost was only Rs 20,000. That effort taught me the importance of working in nature and space. The modules had sky lit roofs. I decided not to emphasise on loud materials in construction yet achieve aesthetics working with tight budgets. The seeds of my passion for green buildings were probably sown at that time.'

As early as the 1980s, she even experimented with rain water harvesting in her compound by embedding stones on a sand bed so that the rain water could percolate down instead of running away. A pioneering effort indeed. Interestingly, the idea behind the system was made compulsory by the state of Tamil Nadu in 2003.

In 1987, she had the distinction of designing homes for economically weaker sections on an invitation from the World Bank. She created incremental

houses which provided sheltered living spaces from day one that could be value-added in terms of other facilities and become permanent homes in later years.

As a talented creative artist, Sheila believes in using indo-centric arts & crafts in her designs. Emphasising the importance of space in all her designs, Sheila says, 'I try to carve out spaces instead of enclosing everything within the four walls of a room. A client was so impressed with the effective use of space that I had used in his project that he commented, 'Your spaces dance'.

Sheila tries to integrate the landscape design into the design process as a working layer and not a mere cosmetic layer.

Her work in spaciology particularly as it applies to healthcare and the leisure, wellness and hospitality industry examines the impact of the built environment upon human behaviour. This obsession with spaces also led her to researching temples and how they use the design to depict different moods. Thanks to her background in classical dance, she explored the Bhava, Raga and



Thala aspects in many of the temples. According to her, the big temple in Tanjore evokes humility, Konarak temple depicts love and the Ananthapadmanabha Swamy temple in Trivandrum represents peace and shanthi.

When I sought clarifications about green buildings, she said that it involves using natural lighting and renewable energy in designs. Such buildings must have provisions for water conservation and natural light sources, exploiting the natural wind flows, accounting for sewage treatment, etc. She is proud of the fact that her new office located in 'Muse' in Tiruvanmiyur was one of the two buildings in Chennai given the Platinum rating by Leadership in Energy & Environment designs (LEEDS) in 2012. The other building to get the same rating that year was ITC Grand Chola in Chennai. She is a founding member of the Indian Green Building Council, Chennai Chapter.

Several of her architectural designs can be seen at Mahindra World City (New Chennai), the Madras Art House (Cholamandal Artists' Village), Kuchipudi Art Academy and the Paranur railway station. Other recent projects of Shilpa Architects include the HITEX exhibition center in Hyderabad and the South City Township by Larsen & Toubro, an approximately 4,000-apartment residential township. Another large scale housing project is within Mahindra World City as well as the upcoming Taj 5-star beach resort near Pondicherry and the regional headquarters for the State Bank of India.

In 2011, she became the first Indian architect to serve on the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Design Innovation, a 16-member team of international experts in design and innovation. She served on the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on the role of arts in society, in recognition of her signature works of architecture that fea-

ture art, culture and heritage. As part of her role at the Forum, she developed the 'Reciprocal Design Index' that details parameters and metrics surrounding sustainable design.

Sheila is also the founder of the Reciprocity Foundation that tries to create awareness at the grass roots level about the challenges faced by our planet and humanity. It seeks to build collaborative and inclusive eco system that would lead to sustainability.

Among the several awards she has won over the years, she considers very prestigious the Lifetime Achievement in the field of Architecture Award 2019 by Builders, Architects and Building Materials (BAM), in association with CII Real Estate & Building Technology Exhibition.

When I posed the question about the future of Shilpa Architects she proudly said, 'The future is secure in the safe hands of my daughter Pavithra.' With a Bachelor Degree in Architecture from School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University and a Masters in Architecture and Urban Design from Columbia University. Pavithra is surely a chip off the old block. She is as much a multi-dimensional creative artist/architect as her mother is. Sheila's son Bhargav has a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from CEG, Anna University and a Masters in Engineering from the University of Michigan. He runs a self-funded and mission-driven startup that has designed and developed 'Fooya!', a mobile health-gaming App. Sheila is also blessed with three lovely grand-daughters.

For all her achievements, Sheila continues to be a humble and lovable human being, very popular among family, friends and colleagues. I am proud of the fact that such an internationally reputed architect designed my small independent home in Chennai, 38 years ago.

Umpire's given is given

These days cricket is in the air everywhere, all the time. It is played throughout the year at the national and international levels in various formats, day and night. It is a constant presence on our TV screens as live telecasts. On the TV channels, seasoned cricketers of yesteryear such as Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath and L. Sivaramakrishnan take up the commentary, explaining the finer points of the game in flawless English. As a result, one can hear even grandpas and grandmas, who might not have so much as touched a cricket bat or a cricket ball in their lifetime, making learned comments on 'yorkers', 'inner edges' and 'fair deliveries'. The rich vocabulary of cricket terms has been mastered by the fans.

This was not the case in Madras during the 1940s, '50s or even '60s. As cricket fans of that era hailing from Triplicane, Mylapore, Mambalam and Washermanpet, we had our own rich cricket vocabulary, far removed from the official version. The terms we used were either 'Tamilised' versions of English terms, or Anglicized versions of Tamil terms. There were also terms that were exclusively 'Madras *baashai*', not derived from any language, living or dead. And some terms were derived from the creative misuse of English words, warping their function to convey a meaning other than what is in the dictionary.

Quantity-wise, there were almost an equal number of cricket matches being played during that era to keep the fans

interested. Only, the quality or the class of cricket played was much lower. In Madras, we had inter-school matches conducted by the Madras Schools Athletic Association (MSAA), inter-college matches, inter-university matches, league championship matches (played amongst Madras-based 'league' teams), Ranji Trophy matches, and the occasional test match played against a visiting team. There were only two formats of the game – the single-inning matches played in the local tournaments, and two-innings matches played at Ranji Trophy level and above. The audience at these matches varied from a few tens to some tens of thousands, depending on the level of the game.

But whatever the level of cricket or the audience strength, the colorful terms used by the fans to describe various aspects of the game were the same. Some English words, as I said, were misused. Fast bowling, for example, was called 'rude' bowling. "Rude-aa *ethinaan*" (literal translation would be 'He mounted in the rudest manner') was how we described C.R. Rangachari's bowling. 'Ranga' was our great favourite and we paid him the ultimate tribute payable to a fast bowler – by describing his bowling as "*Thottaa* sixer, *vittaa* bowled" (conveying the idea that 'If you as much as snick the ball, it will be flung for a sixer because of the pace. If you don't play it, woe unto you, you will be clean bowled'. So much wisdom packed into a couple of phrases!)

Gaaji was another term in most common use then. It is a term of unknown origin, but its meaning was very clear to us. It means a chance to bat or bowl. 'Batting *gaaji*' would be much sought after during the evening practice sessions, and so had to be apportioned in a fair manner among all the aspirants. 'Bowling *gaaji*' was also in great demand, particularly among those who imagined themselves to be the 'next Rangachari'. In a match situation, if a batsman crossed over with a single off the last ball of an over and thereby kept the strike, he was termed having taken an 'over *gaaji*'.

● by
G. Ram Mohan

visalam.rammohan@gmail.com

The Sanskrit word *dhandam* meaning a stick was, for some unknown reason, used by us to describe poor quality. Continuous poor performances would make us dub a player's game as 'dhandam batting' or 'dhandam bowling'. We had our limits of tolerance for poor performances. Dropping a catch was called a '*kottai*'. A '*dhandam* fielder' of the home team, who '*kottai vittaan*' (dropped) an easy catch of the opposing team batsman, would be booed right through the match. Even an umpire could be a *dhandam*. If, in the opinion of the audience, the umpire had given a wrong decision in declaring a batsman out, it would be termed a '*dhandam* out' and the umpire would be booed at.

To make an appeal was termed as making a 'claim' -- or more colourfully as "Howzat *pannaan*" (literally meaning 'He made a Howzat'). In the small time matches, a batsman given out on a 'Howzat' for lbw would invariably contest the decision. The most common excuse given by the batsman would be that there was a 'tip' – meaning there was an outer edge or inner edge. But such a batsman who contested the umpire's decision would be called a *pottai*. Any unfair practice was termed as '*pottai adikkaradu*' and was looked down upon. In Tamil slang *pottai* means a woman; and it is a reflection on how things were in our society before the women's libbers came into the picture.

There were many colourful terms in use to describe the exploits of batsmen. Stepping out and hitting was described as '*yeri adikkaradu*', literally meaning 'climb and hit'. Similarly, playing off the back foot was called '*jaga vaangi adikkaradu*' ('taking *Jaga* and hitting'). It was apparently derived from the Hindi word '*jaga*', meaning 'space'. Modern day commentators would convey the same idea by describing the batsman as having used the 'depth' of the crease.

A bump on a batsman's forehead, as a result of being hit by a short-pitched ball, was called an *urundai* – which in Tamil means a sphere. Obviously, the term originated from the most common hemispherical shape of such a bump. Wickets falling in quick succession, causing as it were a 'procession' of batsmen

in and out of the pavilion, was termed an '*arubathimoovar*'. It is named after a festival celebrated in the Mylapore temple, when idols of celebrated saints are carried in palanquins in a fast moving procession.

A shot where the batsman has a wild swipe at a ball, connects, and hits it away for a boundary or a sixer, was called a '*gaadaa*'. A habitual *gaadaa* hitter (the way most fast bowlers were) was called a '*gaadaa* Munusamy'. It was believed that the nomenclature was after a historic marker at the Chepauk ground of that name who was a great hitter, and mostly played *gaadaa*. A *gaadaa* hitter was on any day preferred by us to a slow plodder who blocked and blocked. Our favourite shout at such a batsman would be "Hit out or get out!".

Like cricket fans all over the world, then as now, we rooted for our home teams with great passion. Our expectations from our home-side players were always very high. But we were well aware of the fact that even the best of players suffered their bad patches and that cricket is a game of chances. But that was not the way we described it. A batsman out for a low score would be consoled by being told 'After all, cricket is a lucky game'. We were also well aware of the fact that it is, equally, a gentlemen's game. Those who adopted foul, ungentlemanly practices like questioning an umpire's decision would be firmly told "Umpire's given is given". Even if it be a *dhandam* out.

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