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MADRAS MUSINGS

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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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Chennai under 'Unlock 4' – what now?

The question that is uppermost in the minds of most residents of the city is whether there is any lockdown at all in place. Yes, those with school and college-going children do know that educational institutions are still out of bounds for physical attendance. The entertainment industry is still under lockdown, at least that part of it that involves screening or performing to a live audience. But that is about it. For the rest, it is life as usual, as it was before March 2020. With one difference – the threat of Covid is forever hanging overhead, rather like the proverbial sword of Damocles.

There are many who feel that nothing much was achieved by the lockdown

anyway. There are others who wonder as to why we went into a lockdown when numbers were low and why we are opening up now, when the figures for infected cases remains at a steady high. There are however no answers. The lockdown was

● by The Editor

necessary for the Government and those in the health sector to prepare for a sharp rise in statistics. We are told that this has been achieved. This is not believed by several but at this stage, it is better to go with an element of trust. There is nothing achieved by negative thinking and being suspicious.

Was the hand of the Government, Central and State, forced into opening up? Most certainly – by the demands of the economy. As a city we operate on a dynamic model – we can function only if everything works. Metropolises such as ours were not designed for shutdowns. There are many who depend on a daily wage and they have already been pushed to desperation and more. Sadly, these are also the very same people who are most likely to contract this dreaded disease. Preaching social or physical distancing to them is a cruel joke. They do not live and work in environments where such a luxury is possible. At the

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TMRL – back on track after a 5-month hiatus

With the lockdown gradually lifting in Chennai, it remains to be seen how the city will handle free public movement even as it continues to battle the pandemic. A layman's analysis of data published by the Tamil Nadu government seems to give hope.

For instance, the city's positivity rate, which had hit a high of 10.7 per cent on August 22nd, came down to 7.8 per cent on September 5th. Additionally, the number of persons undergoing treatment (including home treatment) was seen to dip to 11,029 on

September 8th compared to 11,734 on August 8th.

It's admittedly a small improvement and a deeper trend analysis will probably give a more accurate picture; however, an optimistic person may

● by A Staff Correspondent

consider this a step in the right direction. The bigger concern lies in ensuring that the absence of the lockdown doesn't throw caution to the wind as public spaces reopen and ser-

vices resume. City authorities must take the necessary steps to ensure that preventive measures are upheld by the public uncompromisingly. Their campaign to contain the pandemic continues – fever camps are being conducted across the city and the GCC will reportedly continue its strategy of aggressive testing and close monitoring of the home quarantined. For its part, CMRL is also taking multiple steps in this regard as it cautiously resumes operations this month after a 5-month hiatus.

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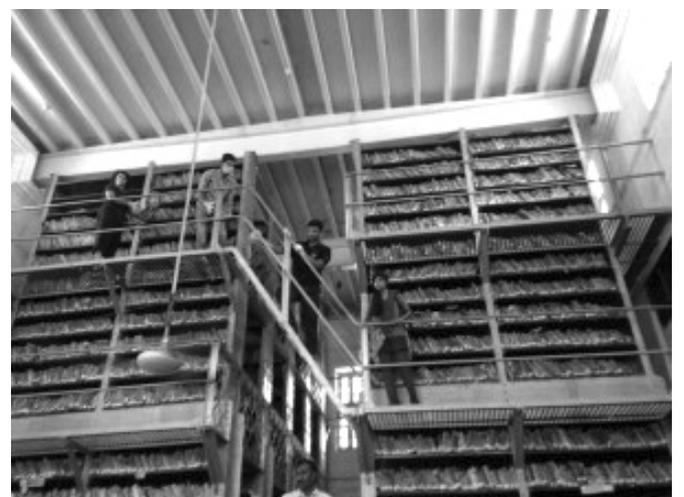
HERITAGE WATCH

The Madras Literary Society Building



Nestled in one corner of the Directorate of Public Instructions campus on College Road is the Madras Literary Society. Its origins go back by 200 years, for it was meant to be the library of the College of Fort St George, which operated from this campus and gave the road its name. The MLS was the fount of intellectual thought for the entire Presidency and was more or less the equivalent of the Asiatic Societies of Bengal and Bombay. In its initial years it was a part of the College building and then, after peregrinating it came back early in the 20th century to its old location but with a new building constructed specially for it. It was most likely designed by Henry Irwin, for many of its design features match those of the Connemara Public Library and the Museum Theatre.

Accorded Grade 1 status by the High Court of Madras, the building itself is in reasonable condition, though what privations it is likely to suffer owing to a high-rise construction happening alongside and which will cut it off from the road is not known. The structure is maintained by the PWD. It is however the library which is by itself in a perilous condition. With a shoestring budget and a falling membership, its collection of rare books face a very dark future. The current pandemic has also meant fewer footfalls and renewals of memberships. A young band of diehard supporters are doing their best to keep it going but it needs more help. We request readers of Madras Musings to help it by way of donations. Those interested can contact madrasliterarysociety@gmail.com



WHAT NOW – AFTER 'UNLOCK 4'

(Continued from page 1)

other end of the spectrum, the State too needs its daily wages, by way of taxation revenue. It has its running costs that have to be met. And for this it needs the city to function.

As of now, all the services and places that experience public congregation have opened up – transport systems, malls, places of worship and open recreational spaces. The first unlocked Sunday, September 6, saw people thronging the last named. A day earlier, a prominent mall in the city had to close down within hours of opening as it could not manage the influx of people. The people cannot be blamed – for how long could they remain cooped up at home? There is a limit to being entertained by the electronic medium.

All of this is understandable. But what is not is lack of discipline among people. It has been shown that the wearing

of masks is probably the least expensive and most effective way of keeping the virus at bay. And yet, most residents of Chennai do not appear to appreciate this. You only need to see the number of bare faces, others with masks hanging around necks or dangling from an ear or nestling in the crook of an elbow. Why is this simplest of rules not followed? The excuses are many and the worst of all is the quoting of some unknown study that says masks are useless in the face of the virus. Are Chennai people so undisciplined that even this basic hygiene requirement is beyond them? Sadly, it would appear to be so. And so, if the numbers spike, we have only ourselves to blame.

Covid is a merciless virus that respects none. As of now there is no vaccine for it. But it can be kept at bay by our taking to wearing of masks and washing of hands with soap. Let us resolve to do this from today.

Back on track after a 5-month hiatus

(Continued from page 1)

The blue line, which operates between the Airport metro station and the Washermanpet metro station, began running on September 7th while the green line, which runs between the St. Thomas Mount station and Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran central metro station commenced operations on September 9th. Of course, service resumption comes with a few changes to accommodate the safety and convenience of passengers.

Trains will run from 7.00 a.m. – 9.00 p.m. in response to requests from IT professionals and office goers. The stations are equipped with hand sanitizers and thermal scanning facilities at the entry to identify affected passengers; those showing symptoms of the virus or recording a high temperature will not be allowed entry. The usage of face masks has also been made mandatory. Additionally, CMRL has implemented various measures to establish social distancing between passengers. Travellers are asked to maintain the recommended six feet distance between each other and the usage of lifts has been restricted to senior citizens and the disabled. Alternate train seats are earmarked with an 'X' to remind passengers not to sit too close to each other. Further, the

train stoppage time has been increased from 20 seconds to 50 seconds, to help passengers board or alight from the train while observing safe social distancing.

Chennai Metro has also launched a couple of new initiatives to render contactless services to its passengers, such as a travel card reader machine. These are available at each station so that travellers need not form queues in front of ticket counters or vending machines. CMRL has also introduced contactless QR ticketing, where passengers can book tickets and buy passes of their choice on the CMRL mobile app through QR codes. Travellers with smart cards can top up balance on the CMRL mobile app or website, as well as view additional details like smart card usage balance, available trips, top-up and travel history etc.

While the authorities take the necessary steps to ensure safety after the lockdown, one hopes that citizens will take cognizance of the fact that we are still battling a pandemic. A worrisome trend is that public usage of masks and safety measures like social distancing has been dipping. With public transport services back on track, CMRL's measures are the need of the hour; one hopes that it is enforced strictly among passengers.

Mangosteen Musings

The lockdown has given rise to several unsolvable mysteries as far as *The Man from Madras Musings* is concerned. Who for instance are the people who ring your doorbell? There was a time when you could identify the local butcher, baker and candlestick maker even from a distance. But now they all appear masked and you never know who is calling. If you thought you could identify them by their voice, forget it, for they all mumble into their masks. If fact the only way you know they are saying something is by noticing the way the mask keeps bobbing around the vicinity of the lips. No wonder MMM sees so many walking around bare faced – they must be sick and tired of trying to make sense through masks.

When this is the fate of even familiar faces, what kind of reception do strangers hope for when they need to perform call on people? MMM includes in this the band of couriers, handymen and errand boys of various kinds. At Chez MMM for instance all of these people prefer to stand outside the gate and yell "Saar..Saar... Saar," in increasing volumes until someone notices. The first Saar is often nothing more than a soothing murmur, muffled by the masks, and then when it produces no results, the subsequent ones, after the mask is removed accompanied by muffled oaths, are much louder. Fortunately the room where MMM works and types his daily quota of words overlooks the gate and so MMM is often the first person to know of a caller.

Thus it was the other day when a man began his clarification shouts for Saar. MMM on venturing into the verandah found a masked stranger waiting without, rather like a character out of Alexander Dumas. He, the stranger and not MMM, was brandishing a basket of some kind, which he through more gesture than word, indicated was meant to be handed over. And so MMM went out to meet the bearer and having signed for the basket, brought it in. He found a sticker that had the name of his good lady, also known as She Who Must Be Obeyed and realized it was a gift for her. Of the sender's identity there was no clue. The basket, on MMM's good lady opening it, was found to contain what appeared on first sight to be a collection of beetroots. There they were, all purple and alluring. Only on touch they proved to be squashy and on closer inspection they turned out to be something else altogether. A card lay at the bottom and it revealed these to be mangosteens, a kind of fruit about which MMM and his good lady had all along been ignorant.

The card was rather appropriately worded when you

consider the colour of the fruit, for it was full of what is referred to as purple prose. But what took the cake was a sentence that said that mangosteens had a Socratic flavour – something that MMM is yet to make sense out of. His first impulse was to throw the gift away, for when you think Socrates, hemlock is usually the next to come to mind. Was this like some Trojan horse? Anyway, MMM and good lady did not know what you did with the fruit and so they decided to keep it in storage for a day or two.

The next day, MMM was roused from his afternoon nap by cries of "Saar...Saar... Saar". Looking out, he found the same masked man. It was like something out of the movie Amadeus. Had he come bearing more fruit? On the contrary, he had come to take back the basket, and the fruits. He had apparently made a mistake and had delivered it at Chez MMM when all along it was meant for someone else who was a namesake of MMM's good lady. That ended MMM's tryst with Socratic mangosteens. He is yet to make sense of that description by the way. And his good lady is still pondering over who sent them in the first place.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

The numbers game

Each evening, a friend forwards that day's statistics for COVID19 as released by the Government of Tamil Nadu. *The Man from Madras Musings* eagerly awaits this missive and then for the rest of the day, his mood fluctuates from sunny to downright overcast based on what he has seen. His good lady, also known as She Who Must Be Obeyed takes a far more balanced view and remains oblivious of fluctuations – in the figures and in MMM's moods. She does not worry about either – the figures or MMM's mood swings. And that is that.

Now MMM does not share in this equanimity. He belongs to that type to whom anything from the Government requires attention and immediate analysis, including property tax, income tax, water tax and other such demands, all of which even before they give you details of amount due spell out the penalties in case you don't pay. Despite having read those threats for years, MMM still cannot control a tremor of the hand and a faster beating of the heart each time the Government chooses to communicate with him. In matters of Governmental communications, MMM is like Ben Bolt's Sweet Alice with hair so brown who trembled with delight at his smile and wept with fear at

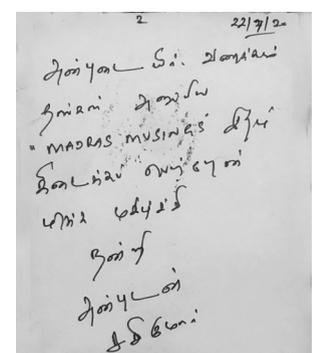
his frown. The only difference being that MMM, what with receiving many Government communiques has hardly any hair left, brown or otherwise.

Anyway, to get back to the COVID figures released by the Government, there are some very reassuring aspects to them. Rather like the pricing strategy of a well-known shoe company, the numbers always hover just below a psychological level. The total cases reported is always just short of 6,000, the number in the city is just below 1,000 and the number of fatalities is always in a high double digit, a tad shy of the nineties. Yes, we do know Tamil Nadu has been a consistent performer across many fronts, but so consistent a performance even in epidemic ratings is somewhat startling. But there are now some naysayers who have begun to doubt these figures. There has been a newspaper report too asking as to how these numbers are more or less rock steady.

There are however drawbacks to this consistency. Just as a person who leads a sedentary life is prone to palpitations if he has to run to catch a bus or avoid a dog, so too has MMM been led into a certain complacency as far as these numbers are concerned. And so, when the figures on certain odd days do rise higher than the Plimsoll line so to speak, he goes into a tizzy and looks on the darker side. The reverse is also true – on days when the numbers dip somewhat, MMM goes singing about the house. All said and done, there is not a dull day with this virus. But as they say, too many shocks to the system are not good and MMM looks forward to the day when the virus will be a thing of the past – with or without a vaccine.

Tailpiece

Of late the offices of *Madras Musings* receive a lot of emails and so *The Man from Madras Musings* was pleasantly surprised to receive this postcard for a change. It touched M and other people at MM that someone had taken the pains to send a card just to acknowledge receipt of the magazine. Thanks friend, and may your tribe increase.





Barricading Houses

Your view on Barricading Houses is very sensible. Such a tactic truly belongs to the middle ages. Hope the concerned authorities learn from the Bangalore example.

Salim Khakhi
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Editor's Note: Unfortunately, Bengaluru continues to put up barricades.

Open book examination

I agree with the suggestion of N.S. Venkataraman (MM: Sep. 1st, 2020) to try Open Book Examination, as recommended by the late Sir C.P. In fact, it is practised in the Departmental examinations of some State Governments, which I too had an occasion to write.

There is yet another type of examination – purely oral and some professors may combine it with a written paper prepared at home. This was the practice in the University of Brussels where I specialised in EU matters and obtained a post-graduate degree. There were about twenty subjects apart from a thesis. I honestly thought that the oral examinations would be easy. But I found it difficult because in a written examination, one could glide over some difficult problems and the benefit of doubt is given to the candidate, whereas in an oral examination, the professor stops you and questions you bringing out your ignorance!

In all this, everything depends upon honesty. Since this is a rare commodity, the UPSC changes the number so that the examiner does not know the candidate whose paper he is correcting.

I was told by a highly respected English professor that a highly respected Vice-Chancellor used to call another highly respected English professor to his office to replace the answer-books of some influential examinees! So there are exams and exams!

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* * *

As proposed in the article of N.S. Venkataraman on the above subject, I would like to add that I was also a student of Annamalai University from 1965 to 1967. Dr. Sir C.P. was the Vice-Chancellor who used to encourage Open Book Examination System. Encouraged by this, Dr. Rajagopalan, Reader of Geology Department used to give us question papers and

Editor's Note – The Police has recently asked residents to record on audio/video/paper the issues they face in their localities. This document reflects what most colonies in the city face.

It will be foolhardy to visualize a T Nagar of yore now. For, those were days when life was at its slow pace without much of traffic, business activities, population, pollution of any kind, or high-rise buildings. There were only independent single contiguous houses. Therefore, a long-time resident of T Nagar can at best only live now in despair and rejoice thinking of the good old days.

Today, T Nagar has undergone a sea change. While no one cribs about the developments taking place in this predominantly residential area even today, as they are but necessary, it has in its wake wrought havoc, which the long-time residents abhor. Though many outsiders may feel that those living in T Nagar are blessed ones as they can get anything at any time, just as it is said that only the wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches, the residents alone can feel the disadvantages and mayhem caused by such mindless developments. The following are a few which needs mention:

- Encroachments of the highest order.
- Multi-storeyed commercial buildings built in violation of rules, and, without any kind of fire safety norms.
- An unsolicited precious gift from the Chennai Corporation – The elevated road level, arising out of relaying of the road over and above the surface, without milling, exposing the decades-old residential apartments, whose floor level at the time of construction was about three-to four-feet above the road level, to floods.
- The dysfunctional stormwater drains which add to the miseries of the residents.
- Streets/Roads turning into parking bay for the shoppers' vehicles.
- Though the residents are the prime stakeholders of T Nagar by virtue of their stay, they are not consulted whenever any project is taken up.
- Footpaths which are meant for the pedestrians are nowhere to be seen as they are hijacked/encroached upon by the vendors/hawkers forcing the public to walk on the road.
- The high-level encroachment both by the vendors/hawkers and the commercial establishments on Ranganathan Street has forced the authorities to build a sky-walk at a whopping cost of Rs.32 crores least realising that the street could be recovered by removing the encroachments at no cost whatsoever. While one has to wait and watch as to whether the said sky-walk will become another Ranganathan Street over a period of time, the going ahead with the sky-walk only indicates the resolve of the authorities not to meddle with the present status quo ante at Ranganathan Street.
- Ranganathan Street, which unruly crowds besiege on all days and specially on holidays and festival days, is a ticking time bomb as none of the shops has fire safety mechanisms. In case of any untoward incidents taking place, it will be disastrous, as, with the encroachments, it will be next to impossible to escape. It will be impossible for the fire tenders or ambulances to make way into the street. In any case, the street needs to be rid of encroachment at least to provide safety and security to the shoppers and others working in the various shops/establishments.
- Encroachment by the commercial establishments – Thanks to Corporation turning a blind eye, encroachment by these entities has been on the rise. As a result, the public space is getting narrowed, impeding the traffic.
- Since the residential complexes are sandwiched between the commercial complexes, in case of any fire accidents taking

leave the classroom during internal exams and used to come back to collect answer sheets. Though students can refer the book for the answers, questions will be such, you could not copy from the books but had to be thorough with the subjects to answer the questions. This was the system encouraged by Sir C.P.

To add here, as second year students of M.Sc Geology, we went to invite Sir C.P. for his 80th Birthday which he politely declined saying: "I thought I

am 80 years young and do not make me feel I am 80 years old."

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* * *

I read with interest the account of N.S. Venkataraman on Sir CP's views on examinations. Long back, I came across a book titled *Examination of Examinations*. The author concludes that examination is

place, precious lives of the residents are in grave danger. Following the fire in a textile showroom on Usman Road sometime ago, the residents of the close-by streets were told by the authorities to stay away. That the residents had to abandon their homes and had to fend for themselves, with no agency or the complex owner coming forward to their aid, needs mention.

- The commercial complex owners have been on a mission to acquire flats in the residential apartments in an effort to eject the residents out of T Nagar. Once they acquire a residential building, they get the same certified as commercial. The role of the CMDA in this regard is noteworthy. Once the area becomes commercial, it will be of advantage to the purchaser in many ways. Though the CMDA states that it goes through the due process, in the absence of any dissemination of the information about the change in the land use, even the residents living nearby come to know only after everything is over.
- Under the Smart City Mission, the authorities are carrying out work. It remains to be seen whether these will indeed make T Nagar really 'smart'. For, T Nagar has become now a role model for all the wrong things and how a city should not be.
- While service lanes are usually made available for public transport system, the ones on Usman Road, where the encroachment is at its worst, are unfit even for a stroll. On the western end service lane of Usman Road, a Government Girls High School is located. Though the said school is creating records by producing cent per cent results year after year, the surprise is that it is functioning with a strength which is far less than its capacity. The reason for such a poor patronage is that the parents are afraid of admitting their wards into a school which is surrounded by encroachment. The school sought the help of this Association, after having exhausted all avenues through its sources. Though this Association had chipped in with its best by way of escalating the issue to the higher authorities and also through the Press, nothing much could be done. It will not be a surprise, if the authorities decide to shut the school due to poor patronage least realising the real cause.
- In the month of February 2020, all of a sudden, two ration shops hitherto functioning from a premises owned and operated by the TUCS off Rameswaram Road, were shifted, without any notice to the cardholders, to a building located on Mambalam High Road. This new building violates rules and has been constructed on the foot path. While at the old building, as it was far away from the main road, the cardholders have had no problem, at the new premises, they have to bear the sun and shine and also stand on the road, risking their lives and limbs, as it witnesses heavy traffic.
- Almost all streets have become parking bays for all those who visit T Nagar. Since the commercial complexes do not have space to park vehicles of their customers, the shoppers turn to the nearby residential streets and park their vehicles. This severely restricts the movement of the residents. The senior citizens find it difficult to go for a walk in their streets for fear of safety and security as vehicles whizz past.

If at all the residents, braving all these imponderables stay put, it is because of moorings to the place. While it is said that what cannot be cured has to be endured, here though there is a cure, the authorities do not want to try at all. This is nothing but an abdication of responsibility by the law enforcing authorities.

We must emphasize that "The Residents' Right to Live Cannot be Denied".

T Nagar Residents' Welfare Association
30, Rangan Street, T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017

an evil, but a necessary evil. Several Education Commissions have recommended reform of examination system, but with little effect.

Now the new trend is to have an entrance test for a course or job. The system has led to proliferation of commercially operating coaching centers. In Newcastle, I came across a letter from the Vice-chancellor of the University of Leeds to the science teacher of a high school thanking him for giving the univer-

sity a bright gem. The teacher had recommended one of his students for admission into the medical course. The student flunked in the interview. The teacher found that the student had lost his father on the morning of the interview and informed the university which gave another opportunity to the student. The result was the letter of thanks. Can we ever dream of such a thing?

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Remembering R.J. Shahaney

With the passing away last week of Ram J. Shahaney, Chairman Emeritus, Ashok Leyland (AL), an era comes to an end. An era of giants of automobile industry who were not bogged down by the restrictions placed on them by a Socialist government. The bureaucrats seemed to have had no clue about the demands of an industrialising nation. Shahaney had the audacity to think big even in those difficult times. He knew that AL could not be constrained and had to grow.

Ashok Leyland, the country's second largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, was set up in 1954 in Madras. Raghunandan Saran, a freedom fighter from Punjab was asked by the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to start a commercial venture. He was given a license to manufacture Austin cars in Punjab. He had already been negotiating with British Leyland to launch a commercial vehicle unit. This became reality in 1954 with state government and institutional support. Leyland became a partner. Ashok was the name of Saran's son and the company was named Ashok Leyland.

AL had British managing directors in the early days. Shahaney was the first Indian MD who joined the company in 1978. A mechanical engineer who grew up in Calcutta, he

worked and trained in the UK. He returned to India to work for Jessops India, a public sector company, which among other things manufactured wagons. Old timers recall that in those early days Shahaney was seen as the last of the English managing directors. He was of the stiff upper lip type, a workaholic and led by example. And working in Madras could not have been easy for him in the early days. He was an outsider in a city where big business was dominated by family groups who were close to each other. However it was because of AL that groups like the TVS moved to Chennai to start auto component manufacturing. Together with AL, they

laid the foundation for Chennai to become one of the major auto hubs in the world.

Shahaney played no small role in this. He operated during the license permit raj. Companies were told how many vehicles they could produce. It was not easy to raise finance. AL's competitor was Telco, now Tata Motors. At that time AL manufactured 12,000 vehicles to Telco's 40,000. Telco was clearly the big brother. That

did not faze him. He pushed for expansion to 15,000 commercial vehicles. There were industry people who thought he was foolhardy.

Shahaney's passion was technology. He understood finance equally well. AL under him became a pioneer in coming out with new products, new technology. The company was the first to introduce air brakes, multi-axle trucks and many others in the country. It was thought of as quite revolutionary then. Shahaney tied up with Hino Motors of Japan to upgrade the engines. When the government started relaxing a bit, he planned AL's expansion into Hosur, Alwar and Bhandara. This was considered

a disastrous step then. He saw the future and took the right decision.

I met him some time in the mid 80's. The magazine I wrote for, was very keen on doing a feature on the company. AL was not media friendly. For that matter, no company in Madras was. I was warned that Shahaney was inaccessible. His very polite secretary would put me off by saying he was busy. This was actually true. He was working 18



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hours a day and was travelling to Delhi at least 3 days a week. Every serious businessman had to do the Delhi trek then. I ran into him at an industry event, introduced myself and asked for a meeting. He was amused at my persistence. He said he would tell his secretary to fix up a date. So I finally ended up meeting him to discuss a feature on the company.

It was always a great experience talking to him. His knowledge on the industry was encyclopaedic. I still remember him explaining the difference between a Leyland truck and a Telco truck, basically the difference between Leyland and Mercedes Benz technologies.

And how his vehicles were better for Indian roads. He always held that unless the government put money in road building and infrastructure, the automobile industry won't grow. He was against AL entering passenger cars. Whatever I know or understand about the automobile industry, I owe it to him.

We did many other features on Ashok Leyland after that. One of the most exciting was in 1987, when the company was about to change hands. Most British companies were on the decline then. British Leyland was no exception. It put Ashok Leyland on the block. There were many contenders. Every takeover tycoon of those days was after it. The Chhabria, Mallya names were banded about. Rahul Bajaj was a serious bidder. The then rather mysterious Hinduja was also in the running. I am sure Shahaney was part of the process but he was not saying anything. Bajaj was the hot favourite, but the Hinduja finally got it. Shahaney continued to lead the company. Ashok Leyland is today one of the world's largest commercial vehicle, truck and bus manufacturers in the world. All thanks to Shahaney's vision and the foundation he laid. For all his achievements he remained a man of few words, non-flamboyant and never seeking publicity.

He headed Hinduja group projects, helped them navigate the labyrinthine ways of Delhi after he stepped down from AL. He was made Chairman Emeritus. He continued to keenly follow the automobile industry.

Shahaney leaves behind his gracious wife Sunita. He will always remain a Chennai icon.

● by
Latha Ramaseshan

they want water, the moment they arrive. Some drink water, some don't, but their faces lighten up when I offer water. After all they have to stand in the sun. Would I have done this before Covid?"

It suddenly dawned on me that he had offered me water when I entered. And lost as I was in my mind chatter, I had not recognised that act of kindness that he was offering without any fuss to people who visited his office.

Courtesy, during Covid

As Chennai opened up post lockdown, I ventured to visit an office in the Guindy Industrial Estate. The 'security' (in office parlance he is generally called security by anyone who wants some work done from him) stopped me at the entrance. A tall lanky man, he asked me the purpose of my visit. "Wait Madam, you will have to go to the second floor. Let me enquire about this". He went inside and returned quickly. You will have to wait outside. Our staff will come and see you here".

I waited under a large shady tree. The skies were quite dark and cloudy and a gentle wind lowered the temperatures. I asked his name. "Rajesh", he said. "Madam you can sit here", he said pointing to a plastic stool. Do people visit the office, I asked. "Yes madam, lots of people visit. This is a finance office you see. Sometimes it becomes so busy that I eat my morning tiffin in the afternoon."

"Earlier three of us would be in front office. Now I am only one manning this desk," he explained. I stayed at home for two months when the first lockdown happened. But it became very difficult later. We have to earn our salaries. I have a contract job Madam and I can be posted in any office. "From July I am working here. And now I am able to take some money home," he smiled.

Where was his home, I asked. "Perambur", he replied.

"But that was quite a problem initially. I had to walk for one to one and a half hours to reach office. I was afraid to take a lift or a ride, which I would have done if the Covid was not there", he unravelled. "After the initial reserva-

To MS, with gratitude

● M.S. Subbulakshmi was born on September 16, 1916. We publish this article as a tribute to a great artiste.

Standing on the balcony of his house, a four year old was humming the tuneless notes of *Kaatriniley Varum Geetam*, the latest MS hit from the film *Meera*, blissfully unaware that his solo performance was being keenly watched from behind by his musically savvy grandmother, mother and a couple of aunts. The applause that followed however brought the impromptu performance to a bashful and abrupt end.

That was not my first brush with MS's music. Family lore has it that, as a toddler, the only way to prevent me from screaming my head off was to play one of the MS 'plates' (as gramophone records were called in those days). The favourites were *Kandathundo Kannan pol puviyil* and *Vaanathin meethu mayil aada kanden* – that evergreen classic of Subhramanya Bharathi. Sometimes, providing a touch of comedy, this exercise had to be carried out in the dead of the night by my mother and an aunt hurriedly relocating the hand-cranked phonograph to the corner of a spacious bathroom, to avoid disturbing my short-tempered grandfather. But then, the MS effect was the same anywhere!

With such early exposure to the music of one of the brightest stars of Carnatic music firmament at that time, one might have thought that my musical talents would have blossomed into something more than the ordinary. That, however, was not to be. So, here I am today, not even a head-nodding, thigh-slapping connoisseur, who can disdainfully pick holes into

musical versatility of S.V. Venkataraman – details which I learnt much later – MS with her remarkably dexterous and mellifluous voice and faultless diction literally breathed life into each of the songs in that most musical of films: songs, which even a pre-schooler, could enjoy. Whether it was the nostalgia-evoking *Andha naalum vandhidatho* in simple alliterative Tamil or the exuberantly evocative *Giridhara Gopala* in chaste Sanskrit or the joyful chorus of *Kannan leelaigal seivaane*, it was difficult to separate Meera and MS or so it seemed to an impressionable child. MS covered the whole range of emotions musically in songs as varied as the soaringly



Photographer Glen Hensley's picture titled leading man and leading lady – a photo taken on the sets of the Tamil musical classic *Meera*, showing Kalki Sadasivam, MS and the director of the film Ellis Dungan.

the most melodious (for untrained ears) of concerts, but a mere pedestrian "enjoyer" of quality, wholesome music. The fact is, I have to perhaps thank MS for even that modest ability.

It was a fortunate coincidence for me that my early formative years coincided with one of the most critical phases in MS's career, when she transcended from being an outstanding exponent of Carnatic music, catering to a predominantly discriminative, albeit local, audience to a popular singer of national prominence. The vehicle that launched her on to the national stage was undoubtedly the Hindi version of the film *Meera*. It was, however the Tamil original that caught my childhood fancy.

To the lyrical genius of Kalki Krishnamurthi and the

happy *Marainda koodil irundu* to the hauntingly sad *Udal unuga*. The most popular was of course the melodious *Kaatriniley*. For me the songs provided much needed release from the forbidding shackles of the newly started school routine.

The forties were as eventful in the history of the nation as they were to a child born into and growing up in that decade. The War, the Quit India Movement, the Evacuation of Madras, the Partition, the run up to Independence and finally the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi provided the tumultuous back drop against which Madurai Shanmukhavadi Subbulakshmi became MS and rose to national prominence first as the saint poetess in *Meera* and then through her soulful renderings of Gandhiji's favourite

● by
Balakesari Komattil*
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bhajans such as *Vaishnava Janato* and *Hari Thum Haro* and the *Ram Dhan* in her own typical South Indian-Hindustani hybrid style. Not surprisingly, it is MS's renderings of the Mahatma's favourites that evoke in me memories even today of the passing away of Gandhiji, as they first did to me as a first-grader seven decades ago.

Today, I still cannot distinguish a *todi* from a *khamboji*, yet I can sit through a classical concert quietly lapping up the music; I am more comfortable listening to a Thyagaraja Bhagavata, a Saigal or a Pankaj Mullick or to the strains of a Lalgudi's violin, a Ravi Shankar's sitar or the piano notes of a Beethoven composition – in short, any music that is elevating rather than titillating. If it is true that one's basic character is shaped predominantly by the influences during first four to five years of one's life, then I, a 'classical' ignoramus, would like to believe that MS unwittingly gifted that modest ability to me, though she was not even aware that I existed.

So, to MS with gratitude, wherever she is today, I can only call out in her own inimitable Meera style:

(*Isai ulagil*) Engum niraindaaye Inru engu maraindaayo?

*Originally written sometime in 2005.

CITY LIGHTS

Mylapore vs. Triplicane

● We thank reader and contributor Karthik Bhatt for locating this gem by N.S. Ramaswami that appeared in a 1956 issue of the magazine *Swarajya*. Is there still a rivalry between Mylapore & Thiruvallikeni?

It has been said that every man born is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. A more valid division of humanity will perhaps be that it pertains to either Mylapore or Triplicane. These are not mere geographical divisions, but two ways of life. It adds to the piquancy of living in Madras City that these two concepts should be diametrically opposed to each other.

Triplicane lies to the north of Mylapore, for the intervening area of Royapettah is of neither of the two philosophies in the midst of which it impertinently ekes out an existence. This very contiguity has promoted a tempest of inimical passion, between the true Mylaporean and the genuine denizen of Triplicane. But, being above all polite persons, they express their incompatibility by means of mutual sneers, innuendoes and sarcasm. Never has there occurred any physical combat between them, though this extreme resort may help them in relieving their feelings.

The Mylaporean has faults, but in his slightly self-righteous manner he thanks God that his ways are not those of the detestable Triplicanite. There is a wide-spread feeling in the stately homes of Mylapore that the hated neighbour is a charlatan and a pretender to omniscience while his ignorance is all too obvious. Triplicane is the true home of pretended cleverness, non-existent smartness and alleged ingenuity.

The characteristic Triplicanite would have been a worthy individual and an ornament to society but that nature or the spirit of the times appears to have supervened in his development to higher forms of life and living. He would fain be knowledgeable, he is merely a scholiast; he would like to be considered compe-

● by
N.S. Ramaswami

tent and ingenious, but most likely he descends to be a trickster. Many forms of activity suffer a sea-change in that locality.

Such, it is often argued in the boudoirs of Mylapore, is the gravamen of the charge against the Triplicanite. It is difficult to say whether this is justified. What is undoubted is that there has long subsisted an irreconcilable enmity between the two areas. This will scarcely cause any surprise; for, nothing can be more galling or irritating to pontificating intellectualism than irreverent scepticism. The dreadful truth – Mylapore can never forgive it – is that the pretensions of Mylapore are rejected in Triplicane, which would set up a tradition and an authority of its own.

Intellectualism sits enthroned in Mylapore, but it is apt to be self-righteous. It is convinced that the moon shines more brightly in its area than elsewhere in the world, a conceit for which Plutarch's Athenian has been laughed at. It has decided to its own satisfaction, if not that of many others, that it represents the quintessence of culture and learning. It is scarcely aware of the existence of such barbarian lands as Nungambakkam and Kodambakkam; it has a nodding acquaintance with the other resorts of the bourgeoisie, Mambalam and Adyar. But it is certain that it has not so much as heard of such unregenerate Ethiopias as George Town or Muthialpet. It is firmly convinced that the centre of the world runs through Luz Church Road.

More Penguin books are sold and read in Mylapore than in any other area. But it may be doubted whether it is deeply acquainted with the Everyman series. Its tabernacle is the Ranade Library, where every form of intellectual excitement is efficiently catered for. The most startling, the most unlikely theory of the origin of the Australian bushmen, the newest concept of chromosomes, are propounded there to the delight of the vast multitudes who throng the hall to the very door and are deeply satisfied that they have manifested a form of superiority to the philistine Triplicanite.

It is thus that the unregenerate vessel of wrath in the neighbouring area would interpret the highest aspirations,

(Continued on page 7)



Quizmaster V.V. Ramanan's first 10 questions are on current affairs and the next 10 on Chennai Super Kings.

1. According to WWF's 'Living Planet Report 2020', which type of animal population has seen an alarming decline of 68% from 1970 to 2016?
2. Which businessman recently became the first person to be worth \$200 billion?
3. Which spiritual leader's book *Let Us Dream*, explaining how a crisis can teach an individuals to deal with problems they face in their lives, is to be released in December?
4. Who was Novak Djokovic playing in the US Open when he was disqualified for hitting a line judge?
5. This actor who achieved fame for playing the Black Panther succumbed to cancer recently. Name him.
6. UNICEF has appointed which popular Indian actor as its celebrity advocate for promoting and supporting its work around ending violence against children?
7. The WHO recently announced that Africa has seen the eradication of which disease?
8. Which famous National Park is to be expanded by 884 sq km?
9. Name the eminent lawyer who was penalised Re. 1 by the Supreme Court in a criminal contempt case that made headlines recently.
10. On September 7, India surpassed which nation to become the second-most COVID-19 affected after the USA?

11. What IPL first did M.S. Dhoni achieve as a captain with CSK's maiden win in 2010?
12. Chennai Super Kings has made the IPL finals in all but two seasons it has played. In which years did it miss out?
13. What is the single biggest contribution of the duo Jaishankar Iyer and Aravind Murali to the CSK legend?
14. Name the Australian siblings to have donned the yellow colours.
15. Which CSK star holds the record for batting in the same position a whopping 160+ times? And which position?
16. Which member of the present CSK support-staff has the distinction of taking a hat-trick and five wickets for the team?
17. Apart from Chennai, CSK has had two 'home grounds' in the IPL. Name both.
18. Name the two CSK batsmen to notch up two centuries.
19. Name the only CSK star to have gone into a secret bidding process in the IPL auctions.
20. Dwayne Bravo has done it twice, while Mohit Sharma and Imran Tahir once for CSK. What feat?

(Answers on page 8)

United India Colony Days – II

(Continued from last fortnight)

We had fun with the simple things in life, starting the day early with the morning newspaper, chatting with friends devoid of any devices, enjoying whatever food we got to fill our stomach, watching TV as a group on the only channel we had and of course playing cricket wherever we found space.

We spent so much time together, especially during the vacations. The day's cricket began with us going to each person's home, waking them up, and most likely their neighbors too with the early morning ruckus. We would get back home for breakfast, play monopoly at Keshav's place, or Carroms at Kunal's or at my place, and then have lunch and snacks in between, and then end the day at the terrace of Govindham apartments, lying down on the sloping roof and looking into the starry night, and talk about anything under the earth – movies, cricket, tennis and girls in the neighborhood. We would try to watch TV together as a group, and mostly at one of the third floor apartments whose occupants were so open to us joining them even if they were in the middle of doing other things. If there was a cricket match going on, then their whole day was also spent with us. Diwali was always great fun as we'd all pool together to buy the firecrackers and light them on the terrace, doing the honors for the rest of the folks at the apartment as well. Then on some weekends or holidays, we'd decide last minute on watching a movie and rush to the theatre on cycles of all sizes or by bus. We could reach Udhayam complex in under 15 minutes and the Mount Road theatres in 20 mins by PTC bus, which was a bit of a stretch even with the light traffic of those days. Sometimes we had the kids tag along, and we'd then change the plan to a more age-appropriate movie.

Life otherwise was just ordinary, and a bit of a struggle at times. We were not blessed economically, my dad was a mix of a good engineer and a bad businessman, which is not a good recipe for entrepreneurial success. So the going was tough at home in that sense, compared to many others, what with four of the family at school. School was fun in some ways but had its pressures too with the rat race as you were getting close to facing board exams and then the pressure of getting into college. So the evening games were a great stressbuster in many ways. There was a period

when I was also really down and that is when the hand tennis incident happened. Now, what exactly is this hand tennis? You see, we were great tennis fans after reading about it in the papers and watching it on TV at one of our neighbor's. I loved watching Ivan Lendl, Stefan Edberg and Boris Becker battle it out at Wimbledon and other Grand Slams. Keshav and I were hardcore Lendl fans and agonized watching live his close defeats to Becker. Being blessed with good hands and weak finances, playing tennis in a proper court was ruled out, but that did not stop us from playing it using our hands on the terrace or in front of our apartments. We even played doubles and that helped my net game as I got to play real tennis later in the US. Keshav was again the player to beat and I was second best. We would play intense games, diving on the cemented floor and hitting the ball with all our might. At the end of the game we'd have both hands red and sore, as you used with your left hand

off her. I am sure that was the case with anyone like me in the neighborhood. She was slim with great looks, intense eyes that were bordering on hazel and had a killer smile. After that first incident she kept appearing more frequently in the area as that was her route to Fatima School. I then found that she was a Mallu too and was staying around 120 degrees apart on Circular road in an old classical styled house that I nicknamed Bhargavi Nilayam (after an old Malayalam movie). Eyes started to meet more frequently as I understood her timings, and I believe the same could be said of her as well. Maya had an elder sister who was in college and used to accompany her most times during their evening walks. I then got to know her real name from Srikanth, but we will still call her Maya for this story, as it was all like an illusion anyway. Their mom also used to join them during visits to the Vinayagar temple on the adjacent Rajaram colony. It looked like they were also not blessed

but it felt like it was more than just a crush.

We then had to shift to Gokul apartments which was to the other end of 4th cross street, which as I wrote earlier is tangential to the Circular road. I thought that the regular 'seeing' would vanish as I was not on her way to school, but I could always walk a little extra to catch a glimpse. I guess Maya quickly figured that we had moved and then increased the frequency of the evening temple visits mostly with her elder sister for company, and I assume that the sister knew what she was up to but just played along in good faith. Those days our eyes were much better thanks to no devices and lot of long-distance viewing, so I could make her out from far, right from our bedroom window itself. I then would move to the balcony looking out into the road and as Maya reached a certain spot the slender neck would tilt up and the eyes would meet again, a full smile would be hard to come from both sides, we'd just settle on a half-smile as a sense of satisfaction. This continued on most days. My mom and younger sister got some wind of what was going on as the slender neck would turn even when I was not there, but quickly retreat back to its position in my absence, leading my mom to tell me in jest that someone might end up having spondylitis soon. An elder cousin of mine came to stay with us for a short period and he could figure out something was cooking too, and he pulled me aside and told me that there was this nice looking girl who strains her neck up to look at our balcony, but he was sure it was not for him, and the most likely candidate was me. I did not resist, on the contrary I did enjoy the small embarrassment that came with it.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

● Ramanuja Iyer
(Ramanuja.Iyer@gmail.com)

as backhand. We even had full round-robin tournaments played in the heat of Chennai during our summer break.

At that time in the early 90s, we were renting an flat at Anu apartments on Circular road across the Fatima church. The apartment had a very tiny open space in the front which was our tennis court. Keshav and I usually play tennis when we did not have more company, as he'd cross over from Govindham apartments just across the street.

That evening was the first time I set eyes on Maya, and I just could not take my eyes

financially, I realized that this was another common ground. Now in those days, we were all simple middle-class guys and talking to girls was just done at school or if they were related to you and not with anyone on the road. So, I never mustered the courage to introduce myself. Obviously, I was not riding high on confidence due to many factors and that played a part too, but we were still 'seeing' each other on a daily basis. I was not tough, but the 'seeing' got me going when the going got tough. It could have started as an infatuation given our age,

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– The Editor

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How well do you know Chennai?

One of the biggest fallouts of the Covid-19 pandemic has been that social events across the world have moved online. Those of Madras Week this year were no exception. With virtual walks, talks and competitions all substituting for their physical counterparts, all eyes were on two of the most anticipated events – the Madras Open Quiz and Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz, considering that they have consistently managed to draw large audiences year after year. That they managed to replicate and even better the success of their earlier editions is ample testimony to our city's status as the Quizzing Capital of our country.

The Madras Open Quiz was held on August 30th and was hosted by noted quiz master and social commentator Dr Sumanth C. Raman along with Abhijeet Shyam. Over a thousand took part in the preliminary round consisting of 40 multiple-choice questions, which was hosted on the Quizit platform. The questions were an interesting mix of things that made up old Madras and which make up contemporary Chennai. Six finalists were shortlisted out of the participants. The final consisting of eight rounds was held over the Google Meet platform and was webcast live. An interesting feature was a couple of 'pounce' rounds apart from the regular direct rounds, wherein the participants other than the one to whom the question was directed had an option to pounce on it before it went to the original recipient. The 'pounce window' was kept open for a specified period of time, after which the person to

whom the question was intended could answer.

A few questions from the finals, edited suitably:

Q: The idea for this venture came about when Balaji, a differently abled person who used to drop his yoga teacher home every day decided to start a similar service to cater to others as well?

A: Maa-Ula, the bike taxi service run completely by differently abled persons.

Q: Name the famous personality who was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967 from the Tiruchengode constituency from this acronym: ABDUL AZANA GYMKHANA SARAANN.

● by
Karthik Bhatt

A: KALYANASUNDARAM ANBAZHAGAN

Q: Name the product which was launched this year by a start-up founded in 2018 by two alumni of IIT-Madras in partnership with a Thiruvananthapuram based medical institute to provide unique infrastructure and housing solutions to assist during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A: mediCAB, a customized portable micro-hospital designed by Modulus Housing to address shortage of hospital beds for Covid-19 affected patients.

Q: January 14, 2019 was declared as an additional local holiday to enable families to

reach their hometowns in time for Pongal celebrations that began on January 15. Interestingly, January 14, 2019 marked the Golden Jubilee of which landmark event in the political history of Madras and Tamil Nadu?

A: Madras State was renamed as Tamil Nadu on January 14, 1969

Q: Connect this non-exhaustive list of movies: *Simla Special*, *Thillu Mullu*, *Keezh Vaanam Sivakkum*, *Netrikkan* and *Avan*, *Aval*, *Adhu*

A: Films for which story/screenplay was written by Visu.

* * *

The Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz hosted by Dr. Navin Jayakumar, well-known quizzier, on August 6th too had more than a thousand taking part in the preliminary round which comprised 35 questions. It was hosted on the Kahoot platform. The format was a mix of multiple-choice questions requiring typed answers and questions that required participants to rearrange the choices in the correct sequence.

The final round, for which the top hundred scorers were selected, saw technology used to its fullest – the quiz took place on Zoom, participants had to answer on Kahoot and the entire proceedings were webcast live on YouTube!

A few questions from the finals, which had 26 questions (one for every letter of the alphabet, with every letter denoting the theme of the question):

Q: Which "5-rupee doctor" who "loved his fellow men" was immortalised in a 2017 film?

A: Dr. V. Thiruvengadam, who was the inspiration for actor Vijay's character in *Mersal*.

Q: Name the bold bantam-weight champ who encountered 'The Greatest' in Madras in 1980.

A: Rocky Brass, who fought Muhammad Ali.

Q: Which low-lying area meaning 'earthen foundation' gets its name from soil from the levelling of Hog's Hill in 1781?

A: Mannady.

Q: What was the name of the temporary English version of the *Tughlaq* magazine during the Emergency?

A: Pickwick

Q: What English word for fighting became a slang Tamil word meaning 'casual or indifferent'?

A: Assault, pronounced as *assaaltu* in Tamil.

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Preliminary round: 12:00 pm
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6 Sep Sunday 3:00 pm
Challenge all your friends and family members!

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Another interesting aspect was that the scoring pattern for the preliminary rounds of both quizzes and for the final in the Murugappa Madras Quotient Quiz was based on both accuracy and speed. The ones who got the right answers in a shorter

time scored more points than the ones who got the answer in a longer duration of time.

Overall, both quizzes were perfect examples of how technology can be leveraged to put together an effective infotainment package.

Mylapore vs. Triplicane

(Continued from page 5)

the noblest sentiments of Mylapore. It can, therefore, cause little wonder that neither should take kindly to the other. They are agreed that the intellectual leadership of Madras City belongs to them, but they are agreed in nothing else.

This is an inveterate quarrel in high places and only fools will rush in to adjudicate where angels may fear to tread. It may, in fact, be doubted whether any such adjudication will not be the means of reducing such gaiety as has survived in Madras City. The hostility causes little harm, but it produces much good. It lends vivacity to life. Blood may boil in the Mylaporean or the Triplicanite at any development in the persistent battle, but the onlooker may permit himself to be entertained at the bloodless combat. There comes the Mylaporean, steeped in thought, his brows almost, if not quite, crowned with the olive leaves of intellectual primacy, or he treads his way through the traffic, his mind immersed in the profundities of a Penguin Special. He has no ears or eyes for the mundane world; he is deeply discussing with the author the latter's new principles of the origin of the alphabet. But he is not so abstracted that he will not eye with disdain the oncoming impertinent Triplicanite who makes no secret of his contempt of these intellectual processes. If the latter does not quite cock a snook at the reverent student, it is not because of lack of desire. The learned scholar breathes fire and slaughter as he stalks away while the ragamuffin (I speak figuratively) pours on him a wealth of ridicule by signs. It is such encounters that lend piquancy to the streets of Madras, and it will be an evil day when the lion sits down with the lamb. Fortunately, neither Triplicane nor Mylapore knows which of them is the lion and which is the lamb.

– Swarajya, July 21, 1956

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– THE EDITOR

When Dhoni knocked the fight out of the Aussies at Chepauk

His durable and indelible association with Chennai Super Kings made MS Dhoni a great favourite with the Chepauk crowd. It may not be wrong to say that he was fussed and feted about and even worshipped more in this city than even in his native Ranchi. Forget the matches in which CSK was involved, even the practice games attracted over 10,000 spectators to the MAC stadium and for the vast majority of them Dhoni was the one who mattered. Shouts of "Dhoni, Dhoni" or "Mahi, Mahi" rent the air even as he just entered the ground or made his way to the crease. Probably no single player of any franchisee has enjoyed the kind of rapport with the crowd and the city as Dhoni did. For the "whistle podu" CSK fan he was simply "Thala". They adopted him as one of their own and for all practical purposes he could have been born in Chennai rather in Ranchi. In any case he was a naturalized Chennaite.

Dhoni of course could do no wrong while playing for CSK but fortunately the Chepauk crowd saw their favourite come off on numerous occasions while representing India in all three formats of the game. In fact Dhoni made his Test debut in Chennai against Sri Lanka in December 2005 in a rain-hit, drawn, match badly ravaged by Cyclone Baaz. And while two

of his ten ODI hundreds were notched up at Chepauk his best in Test cricket was also reserved for the hero-worshipping fans of this city.

The first Test against Australia during the 2012-13 season was played at Chennai in February 2013 and the visitors thanks in the main to skipper Michael Clark's stroke-filled 130 put up a total of 380. Early on the third day India were 196 for four and the match clearly hung in the balance as Dhoni joined Virat Kohli.

The Australian bowling line-up of Mitchell Starc, James Pattinson, Peter Siddle and Nathan Lyon did not know what hit them as Dhoni launched a furious onslaught with the result that by the end of the day the Indian score had leapt to 515 for eight with Dhoni on 206. Bhuvneshwar Kumar (38) was content to play a supporting role to his captain who was out only on the fourth morning for 224 but not before the ninth wicket partnership had added 140 runs in 36 overs.

● by Partab Ramchand

The two swung the balance slightly in India's favour with a fifth wicket partnership of 128 before Kohli was out for 107. Wickets fell at regular intervals but Dhoni surged on getting more and more aggressive the longer he stayed at the crease. But when the eighth wicket fell at 406 late in the day the teams were very much on level terms given the fact that India would have to bat last on a fifth day surface.

This however was the signal for Dhoni to unveil the most glorious phase of his innings.

India were ultimately out for 572 but the Australians by now were a totally demoralized lot thanks to Dhoni's pyrotechnics which included 24 fours and six sixes. Dhoni had faced just 265 balls in a stay of a fraction over six hours. The demoralized Aussies folded up for 241 in their second innings early on the fifth morning and the Indians hit up the required runs for the loss of two wickets to complete an emphatic victory.

Dhoni's electrifying double hundred not only singed the Aussies but left them in such a



shocked state of mind that they never recovered losing all four Tests of the series. Given the circumstances and the damaging impact it had on the visitors

Dhoni's 224 – the highest score by an Indian wicketkeeper - has to be one of the most significant knocks played by an Indian captain in Test history.

Answers to Quiz

1. Vertebrates, 2. Jeff Bezos, 3. Pope Francis, 4. Pablo Carreno Busta, 5. Chadwick Boseman, 6. Ayushmann Khurrana, 7. Polio, 8. Kaziranga, 9. Prashant Bhushan, 10. Brazil.

11. First Indian skipper to lift the trophy, 12. 2009 and 2014, 13. Composers of 'Whistle Podu', 14. Mike and David Hussey, 15. Suresh Raina at No.3, 16. L. Balaji, 17. Ranchi and Pune, 18. Suresh Raina and Shane Watson, 19. Ravindra Jadeja, 20. Win the Purple Cap

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