Does Dipavali HAVE to be celebrated?

The numbers have finally begun to come down. Just as residents of Chennai had assumed that the daily COVID-19 figures would forever hover around the high 900s or low 1000s, the virus has shown signs of relenting. The statistics have taken a turn for the better, with the city registering around 750 numbers each day. The number of containment zones is less than 20. All of these are something to rejoice about. Unfortunately for us, many in the city have begun to assume that the pandemic belongs to the past.

That this is a very foolish notion will be made amply evident when we consider what is happening in Europe and in several parts of the USA – the COVID peak had passed. That was meant from an economic point of view – with factories, commercial establishments and shops opening up, business would look up anyway. It certainly cannot be interpreted to mean that the pandemic has gone. Similarly, while it is good to be optimistic about a vaccine, we cannot forget that as of now there is no such preventive intervention. True, Russia did make an announcement to this effect, as did China, but these are countries whose credibility is low at best. India too is in the race for developing a vaccine and the signs are hopeful, but it is still early days.

Which is why it comes as a surprise that residents of Chennai have chosen to throw caution to the winds and throng the restaurants and clubs, ostensibly as a prelude to Dipavali. Of course, on the one hand it is understandable – prolonged lockdowns have failed the world over and have at best delayed the spread of the epidemic. And not everybody lives in palatial homes, even when it is good to be optimistic.

How the hospitality industry is coping with Covid

According to industry estimates, Chennai and its suburbs are reported to have around 8,000 eateries of varying sizes. With a curb on social gatherings, the pandemic has hit the city’s restaurant industry quite hard, causing a significant number of hotels to shut down permanently. Dine-in services capped at 50 percent occupancy were allowed to resume in the month of June, but the number of customers choosing to eat out are understandably nowhere near pre-COVID levels. Even though food delivery services have fared better – a Zomato report published in August estimates that food delivery orders across the country has reached around 80 per cent of its pre-pandemic business – restaurants are reportedly earning less than half of what they used to before the crisis.

Kiran Rao, a restaurateur who manages premium eateries such as Wild Garden Cafe (Amerythyst) and Chambers recalls the panic that followed the initial lockdown announcement in March. “It was a nightmare. We had to give away all the perishables – food, fruits, vegetables. We were also concerned about the staff. We instructed them to stay put and assured them that their salaries would continue to be paid.” Many hotels had to make arrangements to ensure that the spaces were secure and well-maintained even when not in use. Kiran reached out to staff who lived close by. They visited the spaces when they could. They aired the place well-maintained even when not in use. Kiran reached out to staff who lived close by. They visited the spaces when they could. They visited the spaces when they could. They aired the place well-maintained even when not in use. Kiran reached out to staff who lived close by. They visited the spaces when they could. They visited the spaces when they could. 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Do we need to celebrate Dipavali?

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accommodation to opt for remaining locked up forever. However, a people fed up of remaining indoors would, it would logically be expected, throng the streets. Our Government has of course strangely enough, preferred to keep beaches and parks out of bounds indefinitely. And so, the problem is not the concern, but the complexity, to which there can be no worse option – an enclosed environment with several people in proximity has all the makings of a super spreader.

Last fortnight, despite repeated warnings, shops and establishments in T. Nagar in particular saw unrepentant crowds. The police had to finally step in and seal one outlet. That has served as a deterrent. It is understood that the others, still open, have agreed to a token system to allow entry. But that does not in any way control those waiting outside, and they can cause as much risk as those allowed in. All of this is at a time when suburban trains are yet to operate. If and when they do, the crowds can double and push up the risk manifold.

Which brings us to our lead question. Are we that uncaring a society that when thousands have perished and several others have lost their livelihoods, we dare to forget it to celebrate, complete with the purchase of new clothes? Of course, some may argue that this is one way of boosting the other side of the economy. What if a fresh round of the pandemic breaks out as a consequence? Let us learn to be responsible citizens.

Dipavali is here again next year. It is important that we should be around to celebrate it, in a disease-free environment.

Hospitaility sector & Covid

(Continued from page 1)

Restaurants are finding it hard to manage financially as well. Operations have been reduced, operational expenditure and other costs such as repayments on bank loans, commercial rent and staff salaries remain due. In fact, it was reported that the Tamil Nadu Hotel Association applied to the government for rent relief in March. Despite a reported manpower shortage of significant percentage of employees at specialty cuisine restaurants are not locals – many hotels have had to either lay off their staff or reduce their salaries.

With customer surveys suggesting that most plan to order in rather than dine out in the near future, food delivery services such as Swiggy and Zomato have been an alternative source of income for hotels. They provided an easy platform to immediately digitize ordering and outbound delivery, even in legacy restaurants. In fact, quite a few hotels in the city region have already been offering food delivery platforms during the lockdown. Restaurants and food delivery services are also working closely with each other to help the former feel dated and secure while ordering online. They provide transparency into the safety measures taken by the hotel and their food delivery partners as well. However, some point out that the margins retained by the restaurants are much lower, since the model involves a commission pay-out to the delivery platform.

In a bid to recover dine-in customers, restaurants are taking multiple measures to reassure patrons of their safety. Most hotels ensure that their properties are sanitized regularly, while the staff wear masks and wash their hands on a regular basis. Air conditioners are left switched off in accordance with mandated guidelines and customers are seated as per social distancing norms. Restaurants are turning to technology to minimise human contact, as well – from touch-free transactions to robot servers, they have brought new ideas to the table to secure the safety of customers and staff alike.

Many others have undergone innovation, of course. The number of items on offer has been optimized, with hotels making dishes that comprise ingredients that are easily available and are easy to store, too. Evergreen items like the biryanis are finding a place in hotels that didn’t offer them before. Many also recognize that there are commonalities between the tastes and the rest responded – some have begun to offer customers the option of buying ready-to-cook versions of their signature dishes, as condiments like sauces or gunpowder.

As the city’s restaurants work up an appetite for growth, they are trying to adapt to the new normal. That the sector will recover is in no doubt – after all, a good meal will always be in demand. What remains to be seen is how long it will take to get there.

What’s ‘New Normal’?

The Woman from Madras Musings is bemused. It’s been eight months since the March lockdowns, so it’s safe to assume that most, if not all, are aware of the dreaded coronavirus, how it spreads and the importance of taking appropriate measures to safeguard against it. Wear a mask and keep your distance from one another – the mantra is quite enough to follow, one would think. And yet, a significant number of people seem to simply refuse to put on a mask or practice social distancing. The number of unmasked people (Wo)MMM sees on the roads is staggering. They stroll around without a care in the world, some skipping around unnecessarily.

Dipavali is here again. The problem is, the entire people are turning out? What if a fresh round of the pandemic breaks out as a consequence? Let us learn to be responsible citizens.

Traffic Woes

The Woman from Madras Musings remembers how in the early days of the lockdown, there was much talk of nature reclaiming itself in the absence of human activity. While that particular claim ended up being discounted by experts, pandemics do have a way of bringing it home.

Traffic woes.

The problem is, the vegetable vendor isn’t the only one of her kind – there are many who seem to be unbothered by these new norms. Some even insist on wearing their helmets, too. Save for a couple of heroes, most shoppers were unmasked; as for the people selling snacks – there didn’t seem to be enough space to wedge a sheet of paper between people, let alone a two-arm distance. Going by the videos, one wouldn’t have imagined that our city is currently fighting a pandemic.

(Wo)MMM recalls a Thirukural that she thinks is worth reflecting upon in these troubling times. There’s one that says – “One does not take precautions to guard himself is like straw before fire,” it warns. And yet, in the presence of all this, it’s also worth remembering that one’s care or carelessness, as it were, has a direct impact on the safety of another in these times. Take Kerala for example – with a reported spike in covid-19 infections post Onam, the State has paid a heavy price for ignoring preventive norms during the festival season. (Wo)MMM hopes that we buck up soon and behave with social responsibility – the holiday season is upon us and the only thing she wants to see skyrocketing in the near future are colourful fireworks, not the infection rate.

Traffic woes.

The Woman from Madras Musings noticed how idlis were a hotly trending topic recently. Upon investigation, she discovered that an unassuming British gentleman had posted his personal review of the food item, labeling it ‘boring.’ The analysis instantly drew the attention of several online food followers all over the globe. Some suggested he’s been eating it wrong all along, others urged him to give it another try with their favourite condiments and the rest responded by cleverly insulting British cuisine as a sort of tit-for-tat. The poor gentleman, rattled by the flood of responses, tried to calm down by pointing out that he doesn’t like puttu either – all that admission served to do was to enjoin indifferent puttu-lovers to the protests as well. He ended up ordering a meal of idlis and posted a selfie of himself at dinner, informing the world that he’d all be better off making peace by agreeing to disagree.

Traffic woes.

(Wo)MMM rather admires the thought that for the whole thing – the gentleman, for sticking to his point of view, and the gastronomes, for having the perfect sambar-chutney and so hadn’t actually eaten idlis the way they ought to. (Wo)MMM hopes that the entire debate feels – we’d all be better off making peace by agreeing to disagree.

Traffic woes.

Trending

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Traffic woes.
Hilarious tales of a cycle rickshaw protagonist

In many families there will always be a person known for his funny accounts. From the paternal side of our family, there was one Krishna Iyer or ‘Mappillai Krishnan’ as he was fondly known, being one of the two sons-in-law. He cut a rather imposing figure, with his fat and large frame, but his voice was unsettlingly feeble and thin. He was fiscally supportive to the bus transport department as he would often travel around Madras city in PTC buses (now MTC) by purchasing holiday tickets.

Krishna Iyer was most famous for his unbound love of a cycle rickshaw, light green in colour. His affection for the vehicle was nothing short of divine – he absolutely adored it. His bonding towards it was so deep that he never allowed anyone else to drive it. He liked the vehicle to the extent that both were inseparable by any means. Such was his penchant for the vehicle that he was ferried in it for decades.

If Lord Ganesh walked around his parents Shiva and Parvathi three times to win the wisdom fruit, justifying they are the whole universe, our Krishna Iyer would go around Madras royally in that rickshaw in celebration of it. Perhaps, he would have been the only person under the sky who must have celebrated ‘rickshaw bandhan’ every year.

For Krishna Iyer, the unmistakable cycle-rickshaw was his chariot. His sitting posture on the uncovered pedicab would remind everyone of a monarch sitting on his throne. Be it for attending a marriage or to condole a death, he would promptly travel in it with his trademark attire of vestri and light blue half-sleeve shirt, and with the protruding hand-kerchief tucked under the collar.

Once during Krishna Iyer’s visit to our family, my aunt also was present in the house. Seeing his broad frame, with his belly resembling that of a monarch sitting on his throne. Be it for attending a marriage or to condole a death, he would promptly travel in it with his trademark attire of vestri and light blue half-sleeve shirt, and with the protruding hand-kerchief tucked under the collar.

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When I reminisce, it seems like it all happened just yesterday, when in fact, it has been 50 glorious years. It is true that time stops for nothing and none, not even for the evergreen story of the rickshaw. Over the past half-century, Savitri penetrated the hearts of so many women, unveiling to them the truth of social service, in turn inspiring them to spread the truth of social service to the world. Her capacity to take the right decisions spontaneously is only one of many examples of her wisdom. She was the very epitome of simplicity, compassion and poise, beautifully complemented by a throbbing enthusiasm, transparency in words and actions, and modesty.

Savitri, who inspired so many ordinary women into believing that nothing is impossible, motivating them to form an organisation (NGO) called ‘Monday Charity Club’, rendering great social services by implementing successful projects over a period of 50 years, is no more with us. They say that the poet may die, but not the poetry. Words fail me in expressing her accomplishments. Innumerable needy students and old people benefited through the trust she founded, which extended helping hands and financial support to children for education under the scheme Puttugo Vongi (Betta Dindu). It was a scheme besides providing support and health to the elderly under the scheme Undra Kol. The trust also provided financial support for innumerable marriages and funerals, ensuring support by providing medical support for the sick and deserving.

The culmination of all her social services was the founding of Vishranti, an old age home – the first such in our city. It all started with a small subscription of Rs. 1.50, fifty years ago which has now grown into the strong and stable tree named Vishranti. It was inspired by Ms. Mary Clubwala Jadhav who promoted the cause of welfare for the elderly. With humble beginnings way back in 1978, with the blessings of Maha Periva Sri Chandrasekaren Sarathi Saraswati Swamigal, and inaugurated by Justice S. Mohan, with only one old woman inmate, Vishranti has now grown into a big banyan tree sheltering hundreds of old people.

The rickshaw, Krishna Iyer’s most beloved vehicle, was acquired after three years of tireless efforts of the trust members, and with the support of AVM Trust and Helpage India. It started off as a small project where money was raised among school children and children in a small way. The building for the trust was constructed by the tireless efforts of G.K. Shetty, a renowned builder. The trust received help from unexpected quarters as it grew, and needless to say, all this was possible only due to the able leadership of Savitri and the timely support of numerous people. We also recall with great respect the periodical and timely advice we received from geriatricians whenever we approached them. Vishranti enabled the elderly to lead a dignified life with proper care and support, free of cost. This is truly a home away from home. Older women who were abandoned by their families and society was brought to Vishranti and given the assurance of food, clothing and shelter until their last breath. They were also offered a life of dignity but now feel included with others in society. They were given opportunities to participate in spiritual discourses, dramas and other engagements, in addition to being given quality medical support. Srimati Savitri embraced these people, who were neglected by society, and gave them the invaluable gifts of security and happiness by laying the foundations of many buildings on the Vishranti premises, making them feel like they’ve been reborn into this special home.

It is only fair to mention here the selfless service rendered by nurses and caretakers in the home who have been tirelessly but cheerfully nursing the elderly as per the doctors’ advice, besides supporting them at the time of need for medical treatment. We are proud to mention here that at Vishranti, we have been successful in making these elderly women understand the nobility in donating their organs when they pass away. With their permission, we have managed to make this donation successful in many cases. Vishranti has collaborated with educational and medical institutions, arranging for integrated services like training for nurses, awareness programs for children, etc. Vishranti is represented by its selfless members who engage themselves wholeheartedly in the service of society.

Last but not the least, when an inmate passes away, we inform the relatives so that they can perform the final rituals if they wish to. If there was nobody to attend to the departed soul, we step in and performed the last rites many a time.

Savitri was the reason behind a lot of elderly people leading a healthy life, forgetting all their sorrows in the final years of their life. She was ever cheerful in the service of god, who she served tirelessly day and night, thus creating a temple in the form of an old aged home – a place of dignity but now departed. It is not often that great souls like Savitri are born. Coming from a respectable family, she was self-motivated towards service right from her early years. She lived a selfless life, dedicating herself only for the cause of the welfare of the downtrodden and needy, the old and abandoned. We salute her and feel duty bound to follow her footsteps and continue the noble work she left for us through Vishranti.

Ranganathan Sivakumar
‘Kedhar’ Flats, Ground Floor
New No.14, Jothi Ramalingam Street
Madipakkam, Chennai 600 091
Eiji K. Umamahesh was a man who truly knew the meaning of life. A fre-think, a rationalist, a humanist, he was popularly known or Umama

by his parents stems from the fact that he was (sort of) corroborated as such.

One of the most unforgettable events in his life was the meeting with the actor Mohan V. Raman, who was an icon for him. At our request, his cousin, the author of this memoir, retrieved his website as the source for this information.

The man who wrote his biography, a self-proclaimed teenager, Rat race runner and lampooning them for their lack of ambition.

The ovation that greeted him was nothing short of a thunderclap.

It was during one rally coverage by the radio station, it was obvious that Ejji was the man of the hour. The speaker was clearly out of sorts.

The year 1950 was a significant one for Ejji. It was the year he came to Madras, and it marked the beginning of his personal and professional journey. He was a true embodiment of the Madras spirit.

Ejji K. Umamahesh was a man who took life at its own pace. He was a free-thinker, a rationalist, a humanist, and an atheist. He was a man who loved life and lived it to the fullest. He was a man who had a colorful personality and was known to have a sense of humor.

Ejji K. Umamahesh was a man who was born in 1925. He was a man who had a reputation for being a bit of a troublemaker. He was a man who was known to be a bit of a wild child.

Ejji K. Umamahesh was a man who had a passion for cars. He was a man who had a love for driving. He was a man who had a passion for the open road.

Ejji K. Umamahesh was a man who was a part of the Madras society. He was a man who was a part of the Madras culture. He was a man who was a part of the Madras history.

Ejji K. Umamahesh was a man who was a part of the Madras business. He was a man who was a part of the Madras politics. He was a man who was a part of the Madras society.

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The Judge who renounced his knighthood

(Continued from last fortnight)

Sir S Subramania Iyer's contribution to the world of law went beyond his career as a lawyer and his tenure on the Bench. He played host to several meetings of the Saturday Club, an informal think-tank comprising lawyers, at his residence, Beach House (which is today part of the Queen Marys College campus) where several aspects of law were discussed. It was at one of these meetings that the idea to bring out a periodical dedicated to law germinated. This resulted in the founding of the Madras Law Journal.

He retired from the Bench in 1907 citing failing health, which he felt came in the way of effective discharge of his duties. The Government of Madras offered him the office of a Judge to his career stating that 'the high judicial qualities, the independence of character and the profound learning which he has always displayed throughout his long and honourable career have earned for him a name which will long be held in reverence and esteem by the Government and public.'

Post his retirement, Sir S. Subramania Iyer started dedicating himself to causes close to his heart, especially that of temple committees and towards administrative reforms. It was thanks to the efforts of the Sabha that several temples including well-known ones such as Rameswaram, Srirangam and Tirupati were placed on a more secure footing with regard to management and control.

Subramania Iyer's association with the Theosophical movement brought him in close contact with Dr. Annie Besant. Between 1907 and 1911, he served as the Vice President of the Theosophical Society. Later, when the Trippicane Lodge of the Theosophical Society built a hall in Hanumantha Lala Street in the 1920s, they named it the Mani Aiyar Hall in memory of Subramania Iyer. His close association with Dr. Annie Besant also meant that he would soon be involved in the freedom movement.

In 1916, Dr. Annie Besant along with her trusted lieutenants G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia founded the All India Home Rule League, a movement which aimed at obtaining self-governance for the country. Sir S. Subramania Iyer was appointed the Honorary President. He passionately took up the cause of the League and addressed a letter on the subject to the members of the Subjects Committee of the Indian National Congress held in London in 1917, exhorting it to welcome the 'new-comer as a son and co-worker' by which it would be able to infuse into itself new blood and before long would be able to bring upon the British public 'the pressure which alone will convince it of the reality of our political demands'. He was a great advocate of taking the Swadeshi vow and spoke of the need to provide for the purchase of Swadeshi goods and articles and to afford help for starting of home industries. We, Dr. Annie Besant, G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia were arrested and interned at Ooty in 1917, Subramania Iyer started a Fund to help the trio manage their legal expenses. It was however his act

of writing a letter to President Woodrow Wilson drawing his attention to the arrest of Dr. Annie Besant and also seeking support to the cause of the Home Rule League that ruffled feathers in the highest echelons of the Government.

A letter dated June 24, 1917 addressed to President Woodrow Wilson, Sir S. Subramania Iyer wrote of the resolutions passed at the conventions of the Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League asking His Majesty, the King of Britain to issue a proclamation announcing that it was the aim of the British Government to confer Self-Government on India at an early date, adding that there had been no official response in this regard. Drawing attention to India's contribution of both 'blood and treasure' at various places such as France, Mesopotamia and Gallipoli, he stated that the men were sacrificing their lives to maintain the supremacy of a nation which used it to dominate and rule them against their will. He also wrote of the oppression of the people in India, where officials granted themselves exorbitant salaries and allowances, sapped the country of its wealth, imposed crushing taxes without consent and cast thousands in jail for uttering patriotic sentiments. He exalted the President to prevail

upon His Majesty the King and the English Parliament, who he believed were unaware of these conditions and help further the cause of the country.

The letter raised the hackles of the Government of India, which found fault in act of correspondence directly with the head of a foreign power by a man of the stature of Subramania Iyer, a man who had been knighted. The Secretary of State E.S. Montagu and the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford used the opportunity afforded by Sir S. Subramania Iyer seeking a meeting with them at the Government House to discuss political reforms to express the British government's displeasure in no uncertain terms. In a detailed discussion on the subject at the House of Commons, Montagu called the allegations in the letter 'too wild and baseless to require or receive notice from any responsible authority'. Things took a personal turn when Sir J.D. Rees called Sir S. Subramania Iyer's letter a 'venal production', while drawing attention to his age. Back home, the Madras Mail launched a scathing attack and called for his knighthood to be revoked. The Government of India however deemed the personal rebuke expressed by the Viceroy sufficient and no further action was contemplated in the matter.

In a letter to the press in June 1918, Sir S. Subramania Iyer detailed the timeline of the events and laid out his justifications for the correspondence

THE BEACH HOUSE

(Continued from page 1)

known as Military Engineer's or Shankara Iyer's Bungalow, the two names and the history of that building still remaining a mystery.

OUR OLD FEATURES Beach House in all its glory and dates to 1918. OUR NEW was taken a few years back. Declared 'structurally unsafe' (always a preamble to neglect and eventual demolition), it has remained standing for more than a decade after that! It is given a periodic coat of whitewash both structurally unsafe' (always a prelude to neglect and eventual demolition), it has remained standing for more than a decade after that! It is given a periodic coat of whitewash both

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Why this historic property cannot be conserved and put to use as a classroom for QMC students is a mystery. Alumni recall the joy of attending lessons in this structure. Ironically, the entire QMC campus is recognised as a Grade I heritage precinct by the High Court of Madras.

(A answers on page 8)
From Jesse Owens to Sir Gary Sobers – he reported National and International events in his style

(Continued from last fortnight)

In 1960, when T.D. Parthasarathy went to Rome to cover the Olympics, American broad jumper Ralph Boston, was expected to break Jesse Owens’s decade-long record.

In his interview with Owens dated December 10, 1960 for Sport & Pastime (S&P), which he was also writing for, T.D., notes, “...with the legendary figure of Jesse Owens himself present to watch the race I was anxious to record the on-the-spot reaction of Jesse when his own record was actually broken by Boston. He was then sitting near the finish line of the track, because that was the best spot near the finish line of the track, Boston. He was then sitting...”

Boston travelled with the athletes in their truck in order to interview them out by liaising with the Olympic Games Committee. This made him close to many of them, including Milkha Singh, whose career was propped up by T.D. For an article titled ‘The Tribe of Sportscribes’ which he espoused, you can subscribe to Madras Musings – the annual subscription is Rs 100 and we welcome additional donations too to keep us going. You can make your payments to our bank account as below:

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For an article titled The Tribe of Sportscribes in the October 2020 issue of Madras Musings, Deeptha Vivekanand, former Sports Editor of The Hindu writes, “The highest dignity in the sports echelons did not overawe him. He even put Raja Bhalinder Singh in his place at a meeting of the IOA.”

For a Triplicane Brahmin like T.D., travelling abroad was not without its inconveniences, food being the biggest snag. But the self-reliant man that he was, he would pick up yogurt and cooked rice from the Olympic village to make his thayir sadham, and have it with the various podiums his wife would pack for him. That was his only fuel. No alcohol, no tea, no coffee or cigarettes to get the words flowing.

T.D. wrote an almost full-page report celebrating India’s victory against Pakistan in hockey to clinch the gold at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. His love for hockey was evident in the opening lines: “eleven gallant men will import 11 pieces of gold into India next week and they will be allowed through the Customs with smiles and congratulations.” The report went on to give a blow-by-blow account of the match, making it come alive for the reader as if they were watching it from the stands, T.D., and other sports journalists of yore had to type-write their stories and scramble to file them well ahead of time, to be able to take it to the readers of the morning edition. Imagine the speed and accuracy with which they had to finish their work. The deadline was usually one hour after the game ended and before the copy was due at the desk for editing. Not only was T.D. filing daily reports, he was also planning and writing weekly features for S&P during his travels.

(Continued on page 8)
Reporting in style

(Continued from page 7)

Although he never wrote about cricket, his ability to hobnob with the greats of the game gave him the opportunity to get exclusive pictures and interviews for S&P. Ray Lindwall rode pillion on his motorcycle for a photo shoot! When the West Indies came to Madras in 1959, T.D. managed to get up-close and personal with Sir Gary Sobers and Lance Gibbs. He rubbed shoulders with the likes of Vijay Hazare, Hanif Mohammad and Clyde Walcott. All this, in an effort to get only the very best stories for S&P and The Hindu.

In 1972, when it was time for the Munich Olympics, there were no publications to fund his travel and stay but they were willing to mandate him to write for them. That could not stop the insuppressible writer in search of his stories. T.D. undertook the trip on his own. He took a train from Madras to Delhi, flew from there to Kabul, rode a bus to Istanbul from where he got on the Orient Express to reach Munich. He ended up reaching Munich a whole week ahead of the Games with no place to stay. But, no worries! He managed to befriend some local Germans and stayed in their homes till the Games Village opened. His capacity to network and forge friendships opened doors for him wherever he went.

In Munich, T.D. would go on to interview ace-swimmer Mark Spitz, who had won seven golds, moments before he was whisked away to the U.S. in light of the Black September attacks, which he witnessed live from the Games Village. This interview however, remained unpublished and the tapes were with him for a long time. When Des Pardes, a weekly Punjabi newspaper based in Britain and Europe learnt that T.D. was in Munich, they requested him to write a few articles on Indian hockey. These articles were then translated into Punjabi and published. Such was T.D.’s following.

T.D. did not have a smartphone. Neither did he have a Twitter handle nor an Instagram account. But, in his time, he was doing everything the Gen-Z sports-writer probably would do: breaking news quickly, producing content in different formats, being social, befriending and following players, albeit in the real world. He did everything possible to give his readers the finest stories and was ahead of his time. In the world of sportscribes, T.D.’s name will trend forever.

(Continued)

THE JUDGE WHO RENOUNCED HIS KNIGHTHOOD

(Continued from page 6)

which had caused such furour. Referring to the remarks of the Secretary of State where he had intimated that the holder of the title of KCIE ought to have conducted himself more gracefully, Sir S. Subramania Iyer remarked that none could agree with him (E.S. Montagu) in supposing that the ‘possession of this title debarred him from criticising mistake in the country’. Tracing the events leading to the conferment of knighthood on him, Sir S. Subramania Iyer said that the title had been announced as a matter of routine following the practice to make every Indian High Court Judge who officiated as a Chief Justice for however short a time, a Knight, as a compensation for the inability in elevating Indians as Chief Justices. He added that he had preferred that the insignia be conferred on him by post, which had however been unostentatiously delivered to him by the acting Collector of Madurai and his son while he was on holiday in his cottage on the Palani Hills. Referring to the attack by the Madras Mail, he remarked that it should probably ‘formulate the process by which the dis-knighting should be carried out’, adding that ‘A Durbar, of course would be indispensable as well as a mourning costume to be worn on such an occasion’.

Two days later, in a letter to the press enclosing his address to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras he stated that he had returned the insignia received on his being made KCIE and the Dewan Bahadur medal, as under the circumstances he felt it ‘impossible to continue to avail himself of the honour of being the holder of such a title, or that of Dewan Bahadur’. He also resolved not to receive any communications thenceforth addressed to him by the prefix Sir and the suffix KCIE or the title Dewan Bahadur.

It was a stunning act of defiance by a man of great conviction who firmly believed that ‘among western inventions, none operates more seductively and to the detriment of public interests than these titles’, and that it was to shunned by every honest man if by ‘accepting them he is to be debarred from the legitimate exercise of his civic rights’.

Subramania Iyer passed away in 1924, bringing to close an illustrious life full of remarkable achievements, none more than the renunciation of his titles.

Acknowledgements:
1. Speeches and Writings of Dr. (Sir) S Subramania Iyer, Part I

Answers to Quiz

1. Michael Schumacher, 2. Ant Group, 3. Car, 4. Warnings for racist statements, 5. 130 million, 6. They have been included in the Ramsar Sites list, bringing the India total to 39, 7. Thrust, 8. Asafoetida, 9. Quahog, 10. Abusing its position to dominate search and search advertising.