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MADRAS MUSINGS

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Back to harvesting, but no rain

● by The Editor

And so in a case of going back to basics, our city's Corporation has instructed its officers to go on an inspection drive – each ward has been asked to inspect at least 1,000 buildings, thereby bringing the total to 200,000. The idea behind this is that the city will have a clear picture of how many such structures have rainwater-harvesting (RWH) systems in working condition, how many need to be rectified and finally, how many have no such arrangements in place. All this so that as and when (we sincerely hope it is not a case of if and when) it does rain, we will have begun storing what is now merely surface runoff. The question is, what was the Corporation doing for so many years?

Chennai was the first city in India in modern times to take up RWH schemes. That was in 2003, when the Chief Minister passed an ordinance to this effect and went on media to appeal to the people. The implementation of RWH facilities was made mandatory in all new buildings and it had to be taken up by existing structures as well. The matter was followed through in right earnest (what else do you expect when the CM has said so) and sure enough, when it rained in 1996, the groundwater was recharged and everyone congratulated everyone else on having achieved a great success. Unfortunately people took the rain for granted. The Government changed and the new

dispensation clearly did not consider something so clearly associated with the previous one to be worthy of follow up. Or at least that is what officialdom appears to have thought anyway. And so, RWH was given the go by. Studies have gone on to reveal that most of Chennai's buildings have installed RWH structures more as a matter of compliance with no proper planning or maintenance. As a consequence, the

rainwater is not harvested at all and is allowed to go waste. The worst offender it transpires is the Government itself. *The Times of India* has reported that the SAF Games Village, now an upmarket housing colony for Government officials has no RWH for instance. What was officialdom doing when the Government was building this complex? It is quite clear that RWH, like much else for which we pass ordinances and rejoice as landmarks in our evolution, has been reduced to a mere piece of paper.

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Our OLD is the signboard that records the fact that a gunpowder mill once functioned in Perambur. The NEW is the Don Bosco Technical campus that came up on the same site in 1951. More in Lost Landmarks – see page 4. Photo credits: S. Joseph.



Implications of language formula on Tamil Nadu's progress

● by A Special Correspondent

The draft National Education Policy 2019 has brought the vexed question of language in education once again to the fore. The initial draft recommended the three-language formula that was rejected fifty years ago. The resistance has prevailed over the years – on seeing the outcry to the initial draft, the Central Government rephrased the report text to the effect that students could change their language preference in Grades 6 or 7, “so long as they are able to still demonstrate proficiency in three languages (one at the literature level) in their modular Board examination sometime during secondary school”.

Speaking of ‘imposition’ has led to much misunderstanding.

We should be clear about what it means and what it does not. It means that alternatives should be offered according to one's preference and they should not deliberately or unintentionally deny choice. So long as there is a range of practical options, we can choose what we want – there is no imposition. Secondly, ‘imposition’ does not mean that the subject/language that we are “opposed” to should not even be one of the available options. Thirdly, benchmarking qualifications for jobs and other opportunities should not be equated to “imposition”. Fourthly, in exercising choice, children should know how it

would affect career prospects differently.

A liberal understanding of the term ‘three-language formula’ can ease tension and impart more flexibility to the language schedule in schools. It should not be confined to mean simultaneous learning of three languages, or mean three languages as a must and not two. Firstly, three languages could be covered at different stages of schooling - say, English and Tamil in the first seven years and, say, Hindi, in the remaining five years of high school. Secondly, there should be an option for learning three or two languages but in the

latter case, it is in the interest of the students to learn one link language, that is, either English or Hindi.

The National Policy on Education 1968, by initiating the three-language formula, has imposed an undue burden on children to learn the mother tongue, English as well as Hindi or one other Indian language. Too much of the same kind is sheer boredom and children end up losing interest in the entire curriculum, not just the languages. “Oh, our children are capable of handling three languages,” is a common refrain. The question is not whether they are capable but whether that capacity can be put to more effective use. The Policy's obsession with

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Implications of language formula

(Continued from page 1)

language learning has also upset the balance between learning subjects and learning languages, given the childrens' time, energy and motivation level.

Presently, in Tamil Nadu CBSE schools, English is the medium of instruction and three languages are taught – English as the first language, Tamil/Sanskrit as the second and Hindi as the third. But State Board Government schools teach only two languages – Tamil and English. Private English-medium schools under State Board teach only Tamil and English as languages.

Education is also a State subject – in 2006, Tamil Nadu enacted the Tamil Nadu Tamil Learning Act which mandated Tamil instruction in schools, on finding that many students avoided Tamil by opting for Hindi or Sanskrit in private schools. Likewise, the draft NEP 2019 has also expressed a needless fear of the dominance of English language in the country citing its foreignness, saying that the power structure that it has created “must be stopped at the earliest”.

The suppression of English must be resisted for two reasons. Firstly, English is the window to the world. It opens immense possibilities and gives India a global advantage.

Secondly, weakening the status of English in curriculum is a subtle way of raising the predominance of Hindi to the disadvantage of non-Hindi speaking States. Tamil Nadu should not, therefore, oppose English but defend its continuance and promote it strongly. If both Hindi and English are opposed and neglected, Tamil Nadu would become a language-locked State.

To sum up, the system must offer practically relevant choices for language as the medium of instruction and language for its literary value. As English has a much greater access to higher knowledge and opportunities, there is no harm opening this door at every stage, leaving it to the student to take it or choose some other language. Likewise, Hindi being the widest spoken language in the country, it should also be offered as an option for the student. Local languages are our rich heritage and must be strongly rooted at the foundation stage. All the languages should

not be scheduled for learning simultaneously, but at different stages of the schooling phase.

The table (given below) is an example to show that the structure could be made less complicated. Readers may come up with other possibilities.

The scheme simplifies the load with only two languages from classes 1–7 and only one language from 8–12. Strong foundation in regional language is provided from classes 1–7. In the higher classes, more time is available for subjects. In classes 8–12, if the Regional Language (Tamil) is the medium, English or Hindi are the options. If English is the medium, the language option is the Regional Language (Tamil) or Hindi. So, none of the three languages are neglected. Hindi is not imposed on non-Hindi states at any stage, but made available only as an optional language from classes 8 to 12, for 5 years. It is seen that English is imparted for 7 years as Language to prepare for its use as medium of instruction under option 2, for 5 more years. Thus, the door of opportunity to the country is open through Hindi and to the world through English under the options, the choice being left to the student depending on his/her aspiration level. The three-language spirit is retained but removing the burden of simultaneous learning of three languages. Regional language is not neglected but it flourishes either (i) as the medium of instruction for 12 years and as language for 7 years or (ii) as the medium for 7 years and language for 12 years. The offer of “any modern Indian language” is not really of much significance as it is unlikely that students, say, from Bengal would want to learn Tamil or those from Punjab would opt for Malayalam.

The linguistic diversity and consequent complexity, perhaps unparalleled in the world, combined with competitive language chauvinism is affecting the ability of education to prepare young men and women for a self-reliant future. A large number of children of economically disadvantaged sections studying in government schools, are linguistically disconnected from the world outside the State. These graver concerns must be addressed without getting lost in language promotion battles.

Classes	Medium of Instruction	Language Learning
1 to 7	Regional language*	I – Regional Language* II – English
8 to 12	Option 1: Regional Language*	Non-Hindi areas – English or Hindi Hindi areas – English or Indian language
8 to 12	Option 2: English	Non-Hindi areas – Regional language* or Hindi Hindi areas – Hindi or Indian language

*For Tamil Nadu, it is Tamil.

BYOF/BYOC/BYOW

No, *The Man from Madras Musings* has finally not lost his marbles, and that clarification is only in case you did not think it had already happened. Those are all abbreviations that the IT world has given us. The first is Bring Your Own Food – a scheme when subsidised canteens were wound up following one of these periodic recessions that batter the world of code frequently. The second was Bring Your Own Computer, when the licence laws for software became so confusing and upgrades so frequent that companies shifted the responsibility on to the staff. Now the latest, and this is Chennai specific, is Bring Your Own Water. There is also an offshoot of this – BYOP – Bring Your Own Plate. This is to ensure that you use YOW to wash YOP after you eat YOF and before you go back to work on YOC. There is a more extreme alternative – BYOH – Be (at) Your Own Home and work from there.

All of these have been brought about because of AWS (acute water scarcity and not Amazon Web Ser-

vice) and BYOB (bucket and mug respectively)? And will that mean that for those from up north it will be a case of BYOL (lota)? Or will there be a strict ruling that those who work in the IT Corridor have to avoid MYOW (Make Your Own Water)? Only the future will tell.

MYOW reminds MMM of the latest technological solutions that are available to combat the GWS (Great Water Scarcity) – there is a new product in the block that creates water out of air. Apparently it traps the moisture in the Chennai atmosphere, of which we have plenty, and makes it available for us to drink, bathe and ablute. And then there is the other solution that conserves water by not letting it pour from taps but only releasing a fine mist of droplets. That is all very well for the hands. But what if we need a bath? Imagine standing under a shower and all you get is a fine mist. As for the nether regions MMM assumes it will be a case of BYOP (paper). Desperate times have clearly resulted in desperate solutions too.

either and MMM gave it just a passing glance. It was driven by a man and on the pillion was a rectangular red carton which appeared initially to be a refrigerator – nothing unusual there either. The good man was clearly transporting it, though it did look terribly unsteady on the rear seat.

It so happens in Chennai traffic that your fellow travellers remain alongside for quite a while and it was at the subsequent traffic signal that MMM realised that the man on the two-wheeler had four and not two legs. It came as quite a surprise and made MMM take a closer look. And what he saw made his hair stand on end, like quills on a fretful porpentine. That was no refrigerator but some kind of a bin. And it was upturned on a pillion rider who had evidently covered himself with it and perched behind the rider of the motorcycle, was merrily coasting along. No wonder that four legs had manifested themselves when there ought to have been just two. The lights turned green at this point and the bin, which had

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

vices) in the OMR (that you know) area. This IT Corridor has apparently been planned with no permanent arrangement for water beyond the usual WTs (Water Tankers) and when those went on strike there was chaos. Or as the IT people would have put it – a severe malfunction or glitch took place that caused an outage of the entire system. The denizens of the tech world have been left if not high, certainly dry.

MMM (oh come on, you know what this stands for) is quite amazed, as he is sure are his readers that this hi-tech corridor has such an Achilles Heel or in tech terms a bug that can paralyse everything year after year each May unless a fix is developed and a patch fixed. This can at best be implementation of RWH (see page 1 for what this is) systems so that when the rains come, there will be enough water that can percolate to collection points and be available in the dry season. In the meantime, BYOW it is.

But that is all very well as far as drinking water and washing of plates are concerned. But what of abluitions as they are euphemistically referred to in the old world of plain English? Will that necessitate a policy of

Making the Hair Stand on End

It was if you recollect Hamlet's father who said that he had something to say which would make his son's hair stand on end like quills on a fretful porpentine (which goes to prove that the Printer's Devil existed even in Shakespeare's time, for the bard quite clearly meant porcupine). But be that as it may, it was the turn of the twenty or so hairs on the head of *The Man from Madras Musings* to stand on end. However let him begin at the beginning –

It was a hot summer's day as it always is in Chennai and MMM was driving along with nothing on his brain but the heat and traffic. And alongside comes this two-wheeler. Nothing unusual about that

got off the bike, no doubt to stretch its human legs, was alerted to this fact by the driver. It immediately got on to the pillion, gave itself a shake and was off leaving MMM watching open mouthed.

It is of course something to be condemned from a safety point of view. But MMM could not help admire the intrepid courage of the man who was inside the bin. He had no view of the traffic and despite being completely in the dark, was comfortably seated on a two-wheeler and going along in the Chennai traffic. And the heat inside that bin must have been unbearable too. MMM would not have done this even if he had been paid for it.

Knowing full well that the readers of *Madras Musings* are a sceptical lot and would not believe this story, MMM drove close at the subsequent traffic signal and took a photo of the two men on the bike, complete with the bin. And so, there it is for posterity. Readers will recollect that it was not so long ago that MMM had taken a photo of a pillion rider who had a wooden stool around him. Clearly the habit is catching and probably some view this as a better option than a helmet.

–MMM





An addendum

With regard to the article on E.K. Janaki Ammal (MM, June 1st), I wish to add a few points.

1. Her full name needs to be known to readers of MM: Edavalath Kakkat Janaki Ammal.

2. In the period between 1921 (the year she won her Honours degree from the Madras Presidency College) and 1924, the year she went to Michigan for her Masters, she taught Botany at the Women's Christian College (WCC), Nungambakkam. Soon after her return, she resumed teaching at WCC.

Dr. A. Raman
anant@raman.id.au

E.K. Janaki Ammal

I was delighted to read the well-written tribute to the great botanist, E.K. Janakiammal. It was in Coimbatore Sugarcane Breeding Institute that she worked under another eminent scientist Sir T.S. Venkataraman as a breeder of new varieties of sugarcane and not under Sir C.V. Raman as stated. The co-variety of sugarcane was introduced in

Cuba to make that country the sugar bowl of the world. In a recent book *Fifty Great Women Scientists*, which has recorded only the white-skinned women scientists of Europe, EKJ is also mentioned.

* * *

The death of Rtn S.L. Chitale leaves a great void in service-minded citizens. His two projects, namely The Child's Trust Hospital, Nungambakkam, now taken over by Kanchi Mutt and anti-measles vaccine bear witness to his total devotion for the welfare of children. It was with the help of Canadian Rotarians that these two projects came up.

S. Rajagopalan
30, Kamarajar Street
Chennai 600093

Benefitting from storm water drains

Building Storm Water Drains (SWD) small, medium, large and XL is the biggest money spinner for politicians and their benamis. In most areas, particularly in the suburbs, these SWDs are not even given the right slope. And they lead to nowhere. A lot of people let out all their washing water into the SWD through big pipes, because the space inside the compound is usually paved with cement. This is one main rea-

son the ground water in houses doesn't get recharged at all in residential areas. All the water that a household uses should be let inside their compound, to water some big trees like bananas. The waste water also stagnates in SWDs throughout the year breeding mosquitoes and creating a stench. Secondly, the floor of the SWDs should be made of mud, sand and gravel only. The concrete floor should be removed with the help of JCBs wherever it is already in place. Only the side walls of SWDs should be built of brick and plastered. Once this is done, a large percentage of rain water and waste water shall seep into the earth, filtering it as it goes down, thus recharging the ground water.

Usha Sundar
Plot 43, 24th Cross Street
Padmavathi Nagar
Madambakkam
Chennai 600126

Homer nods!

In the previous issue of MM, I we had, in the tribute to Crazy Mohan published the playwright Marina's name as C.V. Sridhar. It ought to have been T.S. Sridhar. We thank Kalpakam Srinivasamurti for pointing this out. The error is regretted.

— Editor

When 'Tamizh Thatha' turned 80

Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer was one of the foremost scholars of the Tamil language. Born in Uthamadhanapuram in Tanjavur district on 19 February 1855, Swaminatha Iyer dedicated his life to the study and research of Tamil. One of his biggest contributions was bringing to light several literary classics such as the *Jeevakachintamani*, *Pathupattu*, *Silappadhikaram*, *Manimekalai* etc., works that had hitherto been known only through passing references in other pieces of Tamil literature. His painstaking efforts, which involved going in search of and collecting palm leaf manuscripts from various sources, resulted in a huge body of work and earned him several admirers and dedicated followers, besides the moniker Tamizh Thatha. In 1935, when he turned 80, a group of prominent well-wishers from Madras took it upon themselves to celebrate the occasion in a grand manner.

A committee titled the 'Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. V. Swaminatha Iyer 81st Birthday Celebration Committee' was formed under the chairmanship of Sir P.T. Rajan, the Justice Party leader who would become the Chief Minister of the Madras



Dr. U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer.

Presidency the following year. Popular science writer P.N. Appuswami and noted Tamil lexicographers T. Sivaramasetu Pillai and S. Vaiyapuri Pillai were the Secretaries, while Rao Bahadur K.V. Krishnaswami Ayyar served as its Treasurer.

In its appeal calling for public donations dated February 6, 1935, the Committee noted Dr. Swaminatha Iyer's contribution to the world of Tamil and his role in the resuscitation of the great classics of Tamil literature. It credited his work as being instrumental in reforming the prevailing conception of ancient Tamil culture and added

that, in other countries, such occasions were celebrated on a magnificent scale by publishing memorial volumes, raising commemorative statues etc. The Committee proposed to express its gratitude to Dr. Swaminatha Iyer by presenting an address on his birthday and installing his portrait at the Madras University.

An account of the birthday celebrations on 6 March 1935, published by the *Madras Law Journal* Press, makes for interesting reading. The *sathabhishekam* was performed by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer's son Kalyanasundara Iyer in a grand manner, following all ritualistic traditions at their home 'Thyagaraja Vilas' in Pillaiyar Koil Street, Tiruvatteswaranpet (now demolished). In the afternoon, an address was presented to Dr. Swaminatha Iyer by some of his former students, in the form of a poem of three stanzas, which paid tribute to the services rendered by him to the study of Tamil literature. The poem was composed by his star pupil, Vidwan K.V. Jagannatha Iyer (Ki.Va.Ja.). Amongst those present on the occasion were Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, Dewan Bahadur

More on matters life and death

This has reference to MMM's article in the *Madras Musings* issue of June 16th, 2019. Every new incumbent of the Government Pensions seat at the Madras Main Branch of State Bank of India was handed down this story and I received it with a word of caution. Once every year the pensioner had to provide a Life Certificate attested by a gazetted officer to confirm that the pensioner was alive. Reminders were sent to the pensioner if the certificate was not provided, as the next month's pension would not be disbursed by the Treasury. A hapless clerk had once prepared a reminder and a careless official had signed and mailed it. Promptly the Chief Manager of the branch received a terse note from the pensioner that if he passed away the bank would certainly know about it. The pensioner was Rajaji. Whether the story was true or not it conveyed an advice to the official to exercise care while signing such reminders.

There was never a dull moment in the bank, particularly in the Pensions seat. A few helpless old men would come with the request for attestation by the bank official. "You can see that I am alive. Can't you attest? Where am I to find a gazetted officer?" We had to apologise that the bank official was not empowered to do so.

Then there was the requirement for Non-Remarriage Certificate for widows, who received pensions after the demise of their husbands, who had been government employees. Most of the women who came were senior citizens. The absurdity of the situation was at once funny and poignant.

An old man arrived one day with the certificate. He was the recipient of the Widower's pension as his wife, a government employee, had passed away. "I am seventy-five. Do you think I will marry at this age? And how do I go about convincing the gazetted officer that I have not married again?"

We found ourselves on the other side of the table when my mother had to put in her application for her pension at another nationalised bank after my father passed away. My brother had gone earlier to check the documents we had to submit and had meticulously brought every conceivable paper required. Plus, he had all his identification papers including his passport and so did I. And we imagined that we had the advantage of my first-hand knowledge of the procedures. My father had his pension account at the branch for which my mother was the nominee.

After making her sign all the papers in front of the clerk and officer, which took a couple of hours, the clerk straightened and piped, "But her photo is not there in the pension passbook. How can we identify her?" I reminded him that the practice of including the wife's photo in the passbook was recently introduced while my father's passbook had been issued more than two decades ago. The clerk would not yield, and the officer threw up his hands. Our mother who was in her seventies, was getting exhausted.

Driven to his wit's end my brother had a brainwave. Our father had served as the Commissioner of Income tax in Chennai and everybody in the department knew him. A wing of the Income tax department occupied the upper floors of the same building. Without losing a moment my brother bounded up the stairs and met the Commissioner to seek his help. Immediately a lady deputy commissioner was sent down, armed with a handful of stamps and seals and she attested all the papers. The clerk and the officer could not think of any more objections. Still we were in suspense until the pension was credited to my mother's account the next month.

Sujatha Vijayaraghavan
sujviji@gmail.com

K.S. Ramaswamy Sastri and a representative of the Dharmapuram Adheenam.

That evening, a large and distinguished gathering of citizens met at the *Senate House* for the unveiling and presentation of Dr. Swaminatha Iyer's por-

● by
Karthik Bhatt

trait. A tea party with catering by Ramakrishna Lunch Home was hosted by Kalyanasundara Iyer on its lawns, after which the public meeting commenced. P. N. Appuswamy read out a number of messages received from friends and well-wishers of Dr. Swaminatha Iyer, such as Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Sir T. Desikachariar, the Rt. Hon'ble

V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir M. Devadoss and the Raja of Ramnad. Sir P.T. Rajan presented a purse containing Rs 3,001 on behalf of the Committee to Dr. Swaminatha Iyer.

Two interesting gifts received were a cheque for Rs 501 sent by an anonymous donor, with a request that it be utilised by Dr. Swaminatha Iyer towards penning his memoirs in the form of a book and a 60-year-old stylus presented by R. Krishna Rao Bhonsle on behalf of the Board of Studies in Tamil and Kannada of the Andhra University.

Addresses in tastefully done gold and silver caskets were presented on behalf of several organisations such as the Madras Tamil Pandits Sangam, (Continued on page 7)

When Perambur made Gunpowder

Powder Mill Road, Perambur, is a thoroughfare that connects Pulianthope and the Don Bosco campus. In terms of distance it is not much but the name is indicative of a history long forgotten, for this was where the East India Company made gunpowder for quite some time.

This was an essential commodity for the EIC and the records in Madras are replete with references to how and where it was made. The first mill was in Fort St George itself and let us not forget that among the first three men who came to negotiate for Madras from the Nayak of Poonamallee was Nagabathan, the gunpowder maker. A second one was built in old Black Town. By the early 18th century, the facility was shifted to the Island where it changed location at least once. To quote HD Love, "although a new and costly Powder House was under construction on the Island from 1728 to 1732, it appears to have been employed as a magazine, the old building shown on Thomas Pitt's map continuing to be utilised for manufacture. In 1738 the latter structure was reported to be past repair and the Government resolved to erect a new powder mill at a greater distance from the Fort."

The Paymaster and Store-keeper of the Powder House were entrusted with the task of finding a new location and they zeroed in on the "Northwest corner of the Island, between the roads leading to Egmore and Chindadrettah." Emphasis was given on the fact that the structure was at considerable distance from both the thoroughfares and so there would be no loss of civilian life in the event of an accident. The new mill was completed by 1738.

Along came the French in 1746 and among their first acts was to destroy the mill. The English returned in 1749 and built a new mill at the Egmore Redoubt (see Lost Landmarks, MM, August 1, 2018) and possibly to rub it in the face of the French did so with materials salvaged from the demolished Capuchin Church of St Andrews in the Fort, whose fathers were suspected of having colluded with the invaders.

In 1758, the invading French destroyed the Egmore mill but were not successful in capturing Madras. The victorious English rebuilt the mill, but even while work was in progress, a terrific explosion destroyed much of it. Work continued nevertheless

and was completed by 1762, only to have a cyclone take away the roof in 1768. By 1799, there was talk of a new mill, to be constructed near modern Black Town, and that was how Perambur was chosen.

The new mill was constructed exactly as per the plan for the old one on the Island and since the records of the latter have survived, we have a clear idea as to what the layout in Perambur was

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI

— SRIRAM V

like – "twenty separate chambers and open areas for storing, refining, weighing and mixing the ingredients, and for corning and drying the powder." The work was completed in 1802 and from then till 1875, this was the facility that supplied the Madras army with gunpowder. That year, with gunpowder making becoming centralised at Kamptee, the factory was closed. It reopened soon thereafter, this time as a Harness and Saddle Factory. It remained in operation till the early 1900s, when it was closed down, the making of such equine accessories being centralised in Jubbulpore.

But like the legendary cat, this space was to have many lives. The Department of Fisheries, begun at the instance of (later Sir) Frederick Nicholson, ICS became interested in the place for breeding larvicidal and other kinds of fish. The brickfields in the neighbourhood (Brick Kiln Road, now invariably written as Brick 'Klin' Road is nearby and promises yet another lost landmark) were converted into ponds for the purpose.

Lt Col. HA Newell, that indefatigable traveller and writer, visited the erstwhile Powder Mill property in 1919 and left behind an account:

"Notwithstanding its two tall chimneys nothing could be less like the modern conception of a factory than the drowsy old world pleasure at Perambore, still known as the Powder Mills. It dates from the latter part of the 18th century, and is enclosed by low walls, and shaded by a variety of trees, conspicuous amid which is the great Baobab (Adansonia digitata) from Senegal, its huge

suede covered pods filled with a variety of tamarind greedily devoured by squirrels. Entrance is through a gate to south. The interior contains numerous godowns, a number of widely separated bombproof buildings, and some large masonry tanks, where big pink lotus float upon opaque green water. To north, a broken stone bridge partly spans a channel. Originally it led to a widespread bombproof edifice,

St Joseph's Industrial Training Centre, they zeroed in on what was still known as the Harness and Saddle Factory premises as a suitable location. The Brotherhood had just purchased a piece of land in the new colony of Shenoy Nagar but Archbishop Mathias was of the view that such a facility needed to be near the northern end of the city, close to the industrial establishments. The Govern-

ment was approached and a swap was agreed to, with the Brotherhood giving up its land in west Madras for the old Powder Mill/Harness and Saddle Factory space. By 1951, the first workshop had come up on the site.

The St Joseph's Industrial Training Centre and Don Bosco continued here till 1936. During the years when the rains failed, the Perambur brick kilns turned lakes ran dry and that necessitated shifting the fish. As early as 1931 plans were afoot to move the Fisheries to nearer a more permanent water body. In 1936, the army asked the Fisheries to vacate, as it decided to sell the Powder Mills property and the latter relocated to near the Spur Tank, Chetput, where they still remain.

It is not clear as to whether the army did manage to sell the property. But in late 1940s, when the Salesian Brothers were looking for a space to set up their

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BACK TO HARVESTING, BUT NO RAIN

(Continued from page 1)

To what purpose is this post-mortem? And before you run away with the idea that this survey will yield results, let us present you with the next statistic – the study will cover just 200,000 buildings while Chennai has 12.5 lakh constructions. When will we know the status of the rest? Metrowater claims that around 8.9 lakh RWH systems are in place in the city. What is the status of each of these? Nobody really knows. The task of monitoring RWH structures and ensuring that they are effective should have been a routine process with a system

of warnings and fines in case of non-compliance. After all, the Corporation has perfected the method of collecting taxes, sending out reminders and awarding punishments when the same are not paid. Can it not extend the same process to monitor RWH given that it is so vital to our city?

By abandoning an excellent process and let it come to nought, we have brought about this crisis on ourselves. It is going to be an uphill task to set right what has been wilfully neglected thus far. However, that said, it is never too late. But the problem is that once it rains copiously we will go back to our profligate ways, until the next drought that is.

Memories of a cherished grandfather

Reminiscing on Dr. Kesari

On 23rd April 2019, a function was held in the premises of Kesari High School, T. Nagar to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Kesari Schools and laying of the foundation stone for a new building in T. Nagar School in which Vice-President, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu was the Chief Guest. The original programme was to have included a short talk by one of Dr. Kesari's family members reminiscing about him and I, as a grandson of Dr. Kesari was asked to do the job. But with the function having two more VVIP guests who also desired to speak and consequent time constraints, my talk had to be axed. *Madras Musings*, as well as the weekly column *Madras Miscellany* by late Mr. S. Muthiah in *The Hindu Metro Plus* have carried articles in the past on Dr. Kesari and his multifaceted contributions to life in Madras of yore that is Chennai. In my intended talk, I had tried to capture a few recollections of my grandfather as seen through the eyes of a young boy. The same is reproduced here as an article.

— K. Balakesari

My earliest memory of my maternal grandfather Kota Narakesari, known to all as Dr. K.N. Kesari, is that of a grand old man reclining on an easy chair in the hall of our house in Royapettah, with a serious look on his face, lost in contemplation, his fingers restlessly pressing imaginary prayer beads. People were generally scared of him. No one dared disturb him except

my grandmother. By the time I knew him, he had almost totally disengaged himself from the day-to-day running of his business and social activities and was largely confined to his bedroom, emerging only for his daily puja in the large hall or an occasional walk in the garden below.

Unlike today when grandchildren climb over the heads of their grandfathers and play all

sorts of pranks on them, things were very different back then - grandfathers were only to be seen from a distance by the grandchildren. Even so, I remember an incident that revealed Dr. Kesari's softer side. One day he accompanied me and my aunt to our schools in the car. I was a reluctant student and hated going to school. That day, on reaching the school, I simply refused to get down from the car, crying loudly. Grandfather calmly told the driver to take the car to a studio on the nearby Cathedral Road and had a photo (seen below) taken of him sitting with his hands resting on the shoulders of my aunt and myself on either side. Then he dropped me back home! That photo is one of my most prized possessions today. Of course I got a severe reprimand from my mother.

Dr. Kesari recalls in his autobiography that a grand sum of 10 annas was all that he inherited from his father who passed away when he was about 5 months old. How this child, born in penury in a small village near Ongole in Andhra, weathered poverty and deprivation to attain the zenith of prosperity and social recognition, sums up the life of Dr. Kesari.

In his lifetime, Dr. Kesari was a man of many parts: a virtually self-taught Ayurvedic physician, a shrewd businessman, a patron of the arts, a scholar of Telugu and Sanskrit, a gardening enthusiast, printer and publisher, philanthropist, a champion of women's social advancement and a friend equally of maharajas, future presidents and the common man.

Grandfather had a regular stream of visitors on most days as long as his health permitted, which included old friends, prominent citizens and relatives from his native Andhra. I particularly remember the day when there was some excitement when a tall bespectacled gentleman with a turban came to visit him. It was Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who dropped by to visit his old friend. That was before he became independent India's first Vice President and later President.

Dr. Kesari was a connoisseur of good food. In fact, he would

often ask for special dishes to be made for him and it was a challenge to meet his exacting specifications. Since he had worked as a cook's assistant in his younger days before he became an Ayurvedic physician, he knew exactly what he wanted! The house always had a variety of exotic, delicious preserved fruits. And since grandmother was Malayali, gongooora and pulusukoora from Andhra happily co-existed in the kitchen alongside Kaalan and Olan from Kerala.

Grandfather was a patron of the arts and was particularly fond of Carnatic Music. In the early 1940s, Dr. Kesari let out an annexe of our Royapettah house, free of rent, to the Music Academy. At that time, it had no premises of its own and functioned from different venues, dependent on the generosity of wealthy patrons. I can still recall the strains of Carnatic music emerging from that building where music classes were conducted by the Academy. It was a remarkable reversal of fortunes for a man who, years earlier as a

● by
Balakesari Komattil

lonely poor boy in Madras, had to take shelter under a tree for many days, eating groundnuts to ease the pangs of hunger.

Dr. Kesari launched the Telugu magazine *Grihalakshmi* in 1929, to provide opportunities for women writers and scholars. He also established the annual *Grihalakshmi Swarna Kankanam* award to honour outstanding female Telugu literary and artistic personalities. I recall that the legendary Carnatic musician Bangalore Nagarathnamma was honoured with the award on one such occasion. We children - my elder brother Dr. Radhakrishnan, a few of our cousins and I - used to look forward to this annual function which was held in the large hall in the ground floor of the Royapettah building, as we could run around and play amidst guests and the excitement of the function.

Of course the event that I remember most vividly was the Golden Jubilee celebrations in June 1951, of "Kesari Kuteeram", the ayurvedic medicine manufacturing and marketing establishment set up by Dr. Kesari in 1900. It went on for 2 or 3 days with garden tea parties and Carnatic music performances by my aunts. On that occasion, Dr. Kesari was honoured and feted by many of his business associates, admirers and friends which included Shri. V. V. Giri, later to become President of India.

There is one memory of those days that is still fresh. Our house



Dr. K.N. Kesari in the 1930s.

in Royapettah had a wooden stairway with more than 30 steps from the ground level to the first floor where Dr. Kesari stayed in his later years. As his health worsened, he could not negotiate the stairs and had to be lifted in a cane chair, fitted with wooden handles on either side, like a palanquin. Four able-bodied office staff would lift and carry him down the stairs in the chair whenever he wanted to go out. The process was reversed when he returned. It was quite a sight!

Dr. Kesari's life symbolised national integration. Language was no barrier. Though born in Andhra, he set up business in Madras, married into a Kerala family and had a second home in Bangalore for a number of years. In our house, he used to be variously referred to as Thaatayya, Thaattha and Sami Achan. And it was in Lodhra Press set up by grandfather, an Andhra native, that the Malayalam literary and political magazine *Jayakeralam* was launched in 1947 in Madras, located in a Tamil-speaking area.

I wonder if we can think of such translingual collaboration today!

(Continued on page 8)



Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, eldest grandson of Dr. Kesari honouring the Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu with the traditional ponnadai during a function held on April 23, 2019.



(Quizmaster V.V. Ramanan's questions are from June 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 relate to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Which is the highest-ranked Indian company (71st) in the list of "world's 2,000 largest public companies" compiled by Forbes?
2. On June 12, who was felicitated with the 54th Jnanpith Award for his "outstanding contribution to the enrichment of Indian Literature in English"?
3. On June 10, the ASI declared which edifice in the Sarnath complex as a "monument of national importance"?
4. Which popular bank was recently penalised by the RBI with Rs. 2 crore for not furnishing details about the shareholding of its promoter and its plans for complying with stake dilution norms?
5. India's first dinosaur museum was recently inaugurated at the third largest fossil site and also the second largest dinosaur hatchery in the world. Where?
6. Name the eminent Kannada actor and playwright, a Padma Bhushan and Jnanpith awardee, who passed away in Bengaluru recently.
7. Name the former Chief Election Commissioner appointed as electoral officer to supervise the Board of Control for Cricket in India's election.
8. On June 5, whose record did Sunil Chhetri surpass to become the most capped India player with 108 internationals?
9. What was the simple theme of the World Environment Day 2019?
10. Which three oil majors have signed an agreement to form a JV for laying the world's longest LPG pipeline from Kandla, Gujarat to Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh?
* * *
11. Which Oscar-winning star and a UN Messenger of Peace's Instagram post on Chennai's water plight made global news?
12. Name the popular playwright and actor known for his humour-laden dialogues who passed away aged 66 on June 10?
13. Which director has been a subject of ire recently for his comments that Raja Raja Chozhan's rule was a dark period, and that caste oppression had started during his reign?
14. Photographs shot by an Australian Ian Manning in the 1960s and 1970s are now adorning which iconic structure in Chennai?
15. Gemini's Sivaji-starrer *Irumbu Thurai* was the remake of which Dilip Kumar-Rajkumar flick?
16. Which iconic edifice has the address 1, GST Road, Chennai – 600016?
17. Name the musician-director who introduced K.J. Yesudas to Tamil films and in which movie?
18. Which famous cultural activist synonymous with a movement, and a key figure in the initial days of the Congress, was called 'a born actress' by George Bernard Shaw and a 'fox with a golden tail' by Subramania Bharati?
19. *Amaladityan* by Pammal Sambandha Mudaliar is a translation of which celebrated Shakespearean play?
20. Who bought S. Satyamurti's home 'Sundara' because the former could not reconcile to the fact that the latter had ignored his career for the sake of national interests?

(Answers on page 8)

Thandalam railway sabotage case

By S. Nagalingam, Supdt. of Police, Special Branch, C.I.D. Madras.

Sabotage of the permanent track in the Railways does not require any elaborate preparation. A few simple accessories and equally little technical know-how will ordinarily suffice and added to all this, of course, there must be a motive. When the Permanent Way Inspector of Chingleput Division ordered the E.L.R. Gangmen towards the close of last year (1964) to change six sleepers a day as carried out by other divisions, instead of the usual three, it was thought that he was only issuing what was considered a routine administrative order which, of course, lay fully within his competence and authority, not too exacting a demand for that matter. Yet, little did any one guess, at that time, he was supplying a motive for sabotage to be committed on the permanent track. The few disgruntled E.L.R. gangmen perhaps thought that this was the best way to teach an all-too-strict a boss a lesson, but then at what cost?

On October 24, 1964 night, Rajagopal, an E.L.R. gangman, was on his routine patrol duty checking the permanent track near Karunguli. When he arrived at Thandalam bridge lying between Padalam and Karunguli railway stations that wintry night, he found to his horror the fish-plates and keys removed and missing. It was already 10 p.m. All the three South-bound express trains had passed the bridge without any mishap. The last one – the Tuticorin Express – was due at any moment. Possibly, the attempt was to derail this train with its full complement of passengers. Unless the crew were warned in time – and time was running short – disaster was imminent and certain. Rajagopal shuddered even at the thought of the impending danger not around the corner, as the saying goes, but, here, on the track, right in front of him. Whoever the perpetrators of this mean dastardly crime, he should act quickly if the disaster was to be averted. And he did. He placed the danger light at the spot, ran to a distance in the direction of the approaching train and placed three detonators on the track to serve as a warning to the crew. He returned to the bridge only to find to his dismay the danger light missing. Frightened as he was, he ran to the nearby Thandalam village for help.

At the village, he secured the helping hand of the Harijan leader Thangavelu. They took a torch light and cycle lamp and returned to the scene as fast as they could. The Tuticorin Express was fast approaching as seen from the white beam of light from a distance. Rajagopal asked Thangavelu to take the cycle lamp covered with red cloth and run ahead to stop the train, while he stood near the scene with the torch-light turned red. As the train neared the bridge, Thangavelu vigorously waving the red lamp, raised a cry for the train to stop. The crew saw the frantic waving of the red lamp and brought the train to a screeching halt. The driver and guard of the train got down and were fully apprised of the tampering of railway track. The railway authorities were duly informed and the Railway Police were called in.

The Railway Police, Chingleput, registered a case and as the offence was cognizable, entered into investigation. Senior Officers of the Railway and the Police Departments arrived at the scene and inspected. Detective dogs from both the City Police and the Railway Protection Force kennels were also brought and given scent but they did not prove useful. As the C.I.D. were already investigating a few other cases of the kind, the investigation of this case was also entrusted to them.

The scene of occurrence was on the top of a bridge running from north to south and situated between Padalam and Karunguli railway stations between 76/6 and 76/7 kilometres. The entire area was a desolate place and the only village that was near the scene was Thandalam, about 100 yards in the North Eastern direction. The Bridge had four piers. In between the second and third pier, there was a steel girder.

It was on this central portion, it was found, that two fishplates and 43 keys on the eastern rail track and 3 keys on the western track had been removed. Along with the keys, the jaws had also been removed. The railway track at this place was found to be loose and it had lost alignment, which by itself was sufficient to cause derailment.

An investigation of this type of crime is usually beset with numerous difficulties. There is no clue left by the culprits as one would usually expect in other types of offences at the scene. Even the dogs, a usually dependable clue-getting agency were of little help this time. The scene was already much disturbed and what little scent there was, should have been lost by the time the dogs had arrived. The only course open to the investigating officers was to enter into an exhaustive enquiry with a view to get some tangible information which might lead to the identity of the culprits. Simultaneously, an enquiry was also instituted about the railway employees who were directly in charge of the track. An enquiry in this direction has its limitations and the investigating officers at the beginning seemed to make no headway. A patient and persevering enquiry proceeded. A break-through came when one of the officers contacted a nearby tea-stall keeper at Padalam railway station where the railway labourers used to gather for light refreshments. The suspicion turned towards one Velu, a gangman.

It transpired that there was a strike following the insistence of the Permanent Way Inspector, in asking those who were engaged in relaying sleepers to replace six as done in other sections, instead of the usual three per day.

Narayanasami and Natarajan, accused 1 and 2, took leading part in effectively organising the strike among gangmen as well as men engaged in painting work. This caused a temporary set-back in the progress of work on the permanent way. Later, when the labourers sought re-employment, on the insistence of Permanent Way Inspector, some of the leaders chose to tender an unqualified apology, besides disclosing the names of actual persons responsible for organising the strike. Those who organised the strike were not taken for duty.

Disappointed at this attitude of the Permanent Way Inspector, the accused persons – Narayanasami, Natarajan and Ramasamy, along with Velu, conspired to wreck the Permanent Way in order to bring disrepute and discredit to the Permanent Way Inspector.

Velu and the three accused met on the previous day and planned as to what they should do on the day of occurrence. On 24-10-64 night, before the arrival of Tuticorin Express, accused Narayanasami and Natarajan removed a pair of fishplates from Thandalam bridge with the help of spanners. The third accused, Ramasamy, removed the keys while Velu kept a watch over the track. On seeing the night watchman Rajagopal, they ran and hid themselves. Narayanasami and Natarajan took away the red lamp placed by the night watchman on the Karunguli side when the latter was proceeding in the opposite direction towards Padalam. Velu, one of the accomplices, in this case, was no doubt with the accused at all the stages of the conspiracy and until the actual accomplishment of the crime.

Velu was first secured by the Police on November 22nd, 1964 and on interrogation, came up with the entire story relating to the incident. He turned approver in this case. Accused Narayanasami was arrested on November 22, 1964. Natarajan and Ramasamy were arrested the next day. The spanner and hammer used in this offence were also recovered from the houses of the accused. Velu gave a straightforward story of the circumstances under which the conspiracy was hatched and how finally the offence was completed. The motive for the offence, though apparently flimsy, went to prove that when personal hardships enter, the finer sentiments of humanitarian attitude are given a clean go-by. The evidence of Velu was largely corroborated by other material and circumstantial evidence and his evidence was in no way rebutted. Evidence of persons seeing the accused, and Velu under suspicious circumstances prior to the occurrence, was available from other independent sources as well. The accused persons could not bring forth any substantial material either to discredit the evidence of their accomplices or other witnesses.

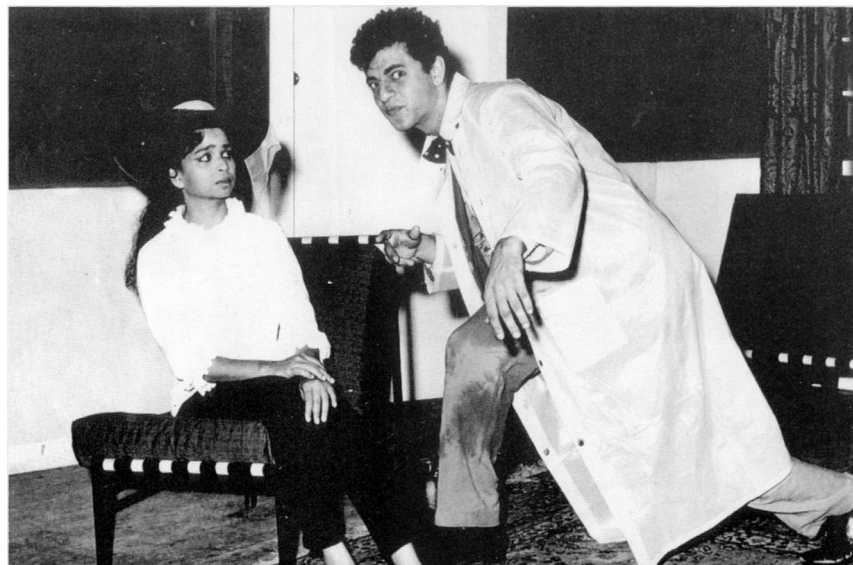
After a preliminary enquiry by the Sub-magistrate, Conjeevaram, the case was tried in the Sessions Court, Chingleput. As many as 36 witnesses were examined on behalf of the prose-

(Continued on page 7)

The Rhodes scholar who took to the Madras stage

In 1965 Girish Karnad literally walked into the Madras Players to play a walk – on part in Tennessee Williams’s *The Night of the Iguana*. He had just come down from Oxford where he was a Rhodes Scholar to join the Oxford University Press in Madras (now Chennai). To quote Girish “ Before that unremarkable debut, I had only acted in college skits and although i had already written my first two plays, they had remained on the shelf. The gratifying thing about ‘ am dram ‘ is that one is always needed and can fit in within its chaotic goings on in some capacity or the other, regardless of one’s ability.

During the next few years, as I acted, directed and made myself useful as a prompter, stage-hand or light assistant I learnt everything I know today about the craft of theatre. I was fortunate. most amateur groups are content to indulge the popular demand for “light entertainment ‘ although even that, I now realise, is not very easy to do. But the Madras Players were never short on ambition and we voyaged through some of the best plays in the world – *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *A View from the Bridge*, *The Caretaker*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Private Ear and Public Eye*, *Krapps Last Tape*. Being with The Madras Players was like going to an elite Drama School. I was with them for five years. During my last couple of years in Madras new plays



A scene from *The Private Ear and Public Eye* (1967), Girish Karnad and Vishalam Ekambaram.

had begun to appear on the vernacular stage in India and we plunged into translation. We discovered that even in English, Indian plays received from our audience a response far more electric than that generated by our productions of Western plays. Evam Indrajit, Shantata Court Chaloo Aahe, Hayavadana it was exciting to be with The Madras Players as they played midwife at the birth of Indian drama in English, and again, as they broke through the circumscribed world of ‘ am dram “ to provide the launching pad for Pattabhi Rama Reddy’s, *Samskara*, which went on to win international acclaim”.

To us in the Madras Players Girish always remained a friend, As his reputation and fame grew and he became one of India’s foremost playwrights

we found him encouraging and generous when we staged his plays. All of us have fond memories. Here is what Vishalam Ekambaram has to say:

Much has been written about Girish Karnad the playwright, the actor and director

both in theatre and films, the winner of many prestigious awards and Head of important national institutions. I would therefore like to recall a couple of anecdotes of my personal interaction with him during his early years in Madras.

My first play, with the Madras Players, in 1967 was *Private Ear and Public Eye* with Girish and Bruno Castalino as my leading actors. I later went on to do *Uncle Vanya* and the *Crucible* with Girish as the lead. I remember now with great amusement how Girish and Ammu Mathew had to come home to get permission from my rather orthodox family for me to act. It was given with great reluctance on condition that both Girish and Ammu went to pick me up and drop me home after rehearsals.

The one very important and profound piece of advice which shaped my growth as an actor with the Madras Players was given by Girish. After one of my early plays with the group – *No Exit* by Sartre he rang me up the day after the first show and told me that while he had no major complaints about my acting abilities I tended to up stage my co-actors which was not good for the play. This is a lesson I have always remembered.

Vishalam Ekambaram and Gayatri Krishnaswami
Founding members of the Madras Players

Resuscitator of Tamil classics

(Continued from page 3)

the Sanskrit Academy, the Madras Library Association and the Tamil Lexicon Committee. The Old Boys Association of the Kumbakonam College (where Dr. Swaminatha Iyer had taught for 23 years) and the Tamil students of the Presidency College (where he took up employment in 1903 on his transfer to Madras) presented addresses too, as did the students of Loyola College and the Government Mahomedan College.

Sir Mohammad Usman, the Chief Guest of the evening, unveiled the portrait (executed by artist Dorai), which had been presented to the Senate by the Tiruppanandal Adheenam, a prominent patron of the Tamil language. Paying rich tributes to Dr. Swaminatha Iyer, Sir Mohammad Usman noted that it was thanks to the Tamil scholar’s efforts that the Adheenam had instituted a scholarship of Rs 1,000 to be awarded every year to the student who stood first in the Vidwan’s examination. The portrait was received by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras, R. Littlehales who, in his address, recognised

the scholar’s achievements and took great pride in the fact that the University had conferred a Doctorate on him a few years earlier for his services to the Tamil language.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Swaminatha Iyer gratefully acknowledged all the praise and gifts received, and humbly submitted that these were to be attributed to the love of the donors for the Tamil language. He added that his success was largely due to his master Meenakshisundaram Pillai and recalled the help he had received from various people in the course of his journey, mentioning in particular Thyagaraja Chettiar, the Tamil Pandit who had recommended his name for the post of Tamil teacher at Kumbakonam College.

Copies of the 64-page special issue brought out by the *Kalaimagal* magazine, to which Dr. Swaminatha Iyer was a regular contributor, were presented to the gathering. A concert by Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar provided a fitting finale to the grand celebrations.

The celebrations were not restricted to Madras city. Meetings were held across several places in the Presidency such as Kumbakonam, Erode, Madurai

and Tirunelveli to commemorate the occasion. Celebrations were also held at Rangoon and Jaffna, where a portrait of Dr. Swaminatha Iyer was unveiled at the Kala Nilayam Hall, evidencing the far-reaching impact

Thandalam railway sabotage case

(Continued from page 6)

cution. In the end, all the three accused were found guilty of the offence and were sentenced to 3 years imprisonment.

Had it not been for the vigilance of the night patrol man and the painstaking efforts of the State Investigating machinery, the disaster with all its dire consequences would have been certain and the saboteurs gone scot-free. There can be no substitute for a patient and prodding enquiry which has its own ultimate reward. And, what better example of this can there be than the Thandalam Railway Sabotage case. – (*The Madras Police Journal*, October-December, 1965.)

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An early Cricket club of Madras turns 90

A celebratory luncheon to bring together past players of a 90-year-old cricket club on 1st May, provided a leisurely break from the feverish excitement of IPL 2019 that had gripped Chennai and the rest of India. The club, Mylapore Recreation Club 'A', is today a team in the First Division of the TNCA league, captained by Ravichandran Ashwin, and includes Cheteshwar Pujara in its ranks, thanks to the enterprise of Take Solutions, the present 'owners' of the club.

One of the original teams to participate in the inaugural league championship of the Madras Cricket Association back in 1933-34, MRC 'A' did not always present such a formidable line-up by way of prize corporate catches – for most of the first 80 years of its existence, it was very much an amateur body, with its players casually sauntering in to the ground of a Sunday morning, for the sheer love of the game. This is not

to suggest any dilution of the quality of cricket on offer. In fact, in the first decade of the tournament, MRC 'A' won the league three times, with three title triumphs being achieved by Triplicane Cricket Club, its arch-rival in Madras's own War of the Roses, a la Yorkshire vs. Lancashire. The two rival teams boasted a world record of sorts for city clubs, producing India's only double internationals, in M.J. Gopalan (TCC, cricket and hockey) and C. Ramaswami (MRC, cricket and tennis). Several other prominent members represented the club at some time or the other, including the legendary Buchi Babu Nayudu clan, the gifted P. Ramesh in the 1970s, C.R. Pattabhiraman (son of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer and honorary secretary of MCA during the early decades), diplomat G. Parthasarathi, fast bowler P.S. Ramachandran (who once took 10 for 18 against TCC) and his three fast bowling sons, Ranji

Trophy and Madras University stars P.K. Belliappa, V. Sivaramakrishnan, S.M. Krishnakumar, M. O. Parthasarathi, S. Sriram and S. Vasudevan. Many of these veterans were present at the get-together, with Krishnakumar making a flying visit all the way from Sydney specially for the occasion. Chief guest N. Murali of *The Hindu* (the original promoters of the club) spoke

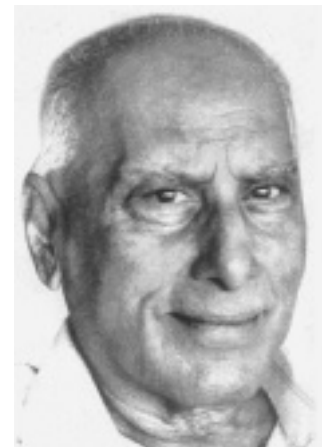
● by
V. Ramnarayan

with warmth and humour of his memories of MRC 'A'. MRC 'B', the second team floated by the Hindu family, continues to be sponsored by them, and Murali, a left-arm medium pacer, played for the club for some time.

P.R. Viswanathan, who ran the club as its secretary for a long period, recalled his joys and challenges as a promoter of young talent. He acknowledged the huge support the

club enjoyed from individuals like Ramkumar, Thiagarajan and Sadasivan. Thiagu, Sada and P.S. Ashok were the informal organising committee that conducted the event with great care and aplomb. K.S. Viswanathan, the CEO of Chennai Super Kings, and M.O. Parthasarathi sponsored the event held at the Madras Boat Club – the contribution including a sumptuous lunch and an elegant MRC 'A' tee shirt for each invitee. While fast bowler P. R. Sundaram was the elder statesman of the gathering, K. Radhakrishnan recalled the thrilling victory MRC 'A' scored over Gopalapuram CC, with only five players reporting for the match. The bowling honours of the match were shared by Sundaram and skipper S. R. Subramaniam, while Radha scored a half century.

Among those present on the occasion was 'Burma Shankar' Subrahmanyam, a yesteryear amateur actor belonging to Cho Ramaswami's Viveka Fine Arts, now famous as Sanjay Subrahmanyam's father. Two other MRC connections with Car-



C. Ramaswami (Cricket and Tennis), one of India's double internationals apart from M.J. Gopalan.

natic music, D.K. Pattammal's sons Sivakumar and Lakshman, were absent.

The writer's own extended family was represented in MRC 'A' through the decades by the likes of P.S. Ramachandran, P.N. Sundaresan, P.N. Venkatraman, P.R. Sundaram, P.R. Venkatachalam, P.R. Viswanathan, P.S. Narayanan, P.S. Ramachandran (the 2nd), V. Ramnarayan, V. Sivaramakrishnan, G.R. Venkatakrishnan, P.S. Ashok, P.S. Narayanan (the 2nd) and P.S. Ramachandran (the 3rd)].

CHERISHED CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

(Continued from page 5)

ago culminated in the setting up of Kesari Education Society, that today runs schools in Mylapore and T. Nagar.

The ayurvedic medicines manufacturing and marketing establishment set up by Dr. Kesari in 1900, when he wrote in charcoal on the wall

of his house "Kesari Kuteeram Ayurvedic Oushadhasala" has had an uninterrupted run for the past 120 years, continuing to provide safe and affordable herbal medicines, particularly to the economically weaker sections of the society.

Today I look back on those happy, carefree years of my

childhood with a mixed feeling of nostalgia and regret: nostalgia for the wonderful days gone by when Dr. Kesari was an imposing, all pervading presence in our lives, and regret that in the limited period that I knew him as a child there were not more opportunities to interact with a remarkable multifaceted personality.

Answers to Quiz

1. Reliance Industries, 2. Amitava Ghosh, 3. Chaukhandi Stupa, 4. Kotak Mahindra Bank, 5. Raiyoli near Balasinor in Mahisagar district of Gujarat, 6. Girish Karnad, 7. N. Gopalaswami, 8. Bhaichung Bhutia, 9. 'Beat Air Pollution', 10. IOCL, BPCL and HPCL.

* * *

11. Leonardo de Caprio, 12. 'Crazy' Mohan, 13. Pa. Ranjith, 14. Chennai Central, 15. 'Paigham', 16. The St Thomas Garrison Church, 17. Veena maestro S. Balachandrar in 'Bomma', 18. Annie Besant, 19. Hamlet, 20. K.B. Sundarambal.

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