WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Yet another Government-run Museum in city

– With no creative plans for making it relevant

The State Government has announced that Humayun Mahal, part of historic Chepauk Palace, will soon be converted into Independence Day Museum. It will house memorabilia from the freedom struggle, donated by families of various patriots. It will have besides, a gallery for women freedom fighters and one more which will be an interactive site for lesser-known faces from the struggle for Independence. There will also be on display cannon, swords, documents and other objects transferred from various other museums in the State. The Department of Museums is preparing a detailed project report with the help of a consultant, after the approval of which, the process of release of tenders will begin, followed by execution. Which is all to the good. What about the actual functioning of the museum? Has any thought been given to that?

● by Sriram V.

Past experience indicates that this vital, and often more important aspect of a museum will not have been paid any attention to. There are, all over the city, many museums now, ranging from the Government-run entity at Egmore to smaller displays belonging to the High Court, the Police, the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, the ASI, the Railways and the San Thome Basilica. On the anvil are a few more including the old Anatomy Block at the Madras Medical College, the Victoria Public Hall, and one more at Ripon Buildings itself. There are besides, many memorials that double up as museums as well, such as the residences of Kamaraj and Subramania Bharathi, and the commemorative buildings including, and around, Gandhi Mandapam. The Government needs to ponder over how (Continued on page 2)

More loss of green cover: Chennai District Green Committee approves NHAI Port-Maduravoyal Expressway project

The Chennai District Green Committee has approved an application from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to fell roughly 2,200 trees under the scope of its Chennai Port-Maduravoyal Elevated Expressway project. According to media reports, the project will ease the movement of heavy motor vehicles along the route — the current detour runs to nearly 75 kms and takes two hours, which the proposed elevated corridor will cut down to 45 minutes. Operations at Chennai port are expected to gain by an increase in handling capacity and reduction in waiting time. That the project stands to benefit the city is of little argument; what grates is the loss of precious green cover that Chennai can ill afford to deplete.

● by Varsha V.

According to a report in the Times of India earlier in April, the Chennai Metropolitan Area has suffered a 13.3 per cent loss of vegetation between 2013 and 2022, amounting to a whopping 15.54 sqkm; this has directly contributed to a 6.53 degree Celsius increase in land surface temperature. As Chennai loses cool pockets of greenery, lakes and marshes to rapid urbanisation, the need is emerging for cohesive, impactful policies that mandate green development. The copse of trees that the project is proposing to cut down is a dense thicket under the Maduravoyal flyover, that — ironically enough — was planted five years ago with funds provided by NHAI under the Green Highways Policy 2015.

(Continued on page 2)

Jammi Buildings has changed hands and is slated for demolition. Associated with Jammi’s Liver Cure which saved the lives of several infants from the 1930s till the 1970s, it was a landmark in the Mylapore-Royapettah area. It was in every way a tribute to the vision of its founder Jammi Venkataramanayya.

Constructed in 1951, Jammi Buildings is also a tribute to the Art Deco style. The architect (not identified at present) made perfect use of a trapezoid plot to come up with a commercial edifice that allowed fresh air, light, and ease of access. The recent years have not been kind to Jammi Buildings. Ad hoc extensions, lack of uniformity in signage and poor maintenance, all combined to give it a run-down appearance and it was but a question of time before its fate was sealed.

‘Why are you lamenting over such an ugly building,’ was a comment received on social media. But that ugliness was superficial. A coat of paint, a removal of unwanted additions and uniformity of signage would have restored Jammi Buildings to all its beauty. But in Chennai we have not come to appreciate buildings for anything beyond real estate value. And there are no rewards to owners for preserving heritage.

And so, farewell, Jammi Buildings.
MORE LOSS OF GREEN COVER

The afforestation initiative cost Rs. 6.64 crores and was carried out in the wake of Nirmalions' protests. However, a MoU soon followed between the NHAI and the Forest Department, allowing the former leeway to conduct development activities on the same land if necessary. The question then – as TD Babu of the NGO Nizhal points out – is this: If further development was anticipated, why plant the trees on this particular patch of land in the first place? Speaking to The Hindu about the issue at hand, Mr. Babu said, “In such a case, the Forest Department should have gone for planting shrubs instead of trees. The NHAI should not have allowed the planting of trees in large numbers, especially within the ramp area. The technically sound Forest Department should not have created the dense green cover.”

THE OPENING OF MUSEUM IN DELHI

This is that era of the year when many of our city people go abroad to spend time with their children and more importantly, grandchildren. And of some, no doubt stuck in some suburb with very little to do in foreign shores, become writers. Most inflict themselves on WhatsApp groups but a few, however, are not rising to the bait. Having politely made his excuses, MMM hung up.

The Overseas Brigade

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short 'n SNAPPY

esus thought about the history of our glittering skies and some instances of what he had observed in progress seem to be the eventual goal. However, a MoU soon followed between the NHAI and the Forest Department, allowing the former leeway to conduct development activities on the same land if necessary. The question then – as TD Babu of the NGO Nizhal points out – is this: If further development was anticipated, why plant the trees on this particular patch of land in the first place? Speaking to The Hindu about the issue at hand, Mr. Babu said, “In such a case, the Forest Department should have gone for planting shrubs instead of trees. The NHAI should not have allowed the planting of trees in large numbers, especially within the ramp area. The technically sound Forest Department should not have created the dense green cover.”

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Pondicherry, the film Galatta Kalyanam and the IITF 1968

I wanted to see Galatta Kalyanam when a TV Channel was showing it two days ago because Sivaji Ganesan and Jayalalithaa were in the lead with a host of actors like Mansaram, Cho and others. There was a beautiful song in the film shot at the International Fair in 1968 at Anna Nagar with the Vivasvarayya Tower dominating. The Tower is still there! But much to my disappointment, the channel, cut out the song which to me was the soul of this film, as it was shot entirely at the Trade Fare grounds. I was disappointed not to see the pavilions, particularly that of Pondicherry. But, luckily, I could retrieve the song from a post on Facebook!

When I was posted to Pondicherry in 1967 as Development Secretary-cum-Collector from the highly industrialised Gujarat, the Government naturally expected me to change the essentially agricultural face of Pondicherry. The Union Territory then had four composite textile mills and a sugar mill. Other than this, there was no industry worth the name, particularly small industries providing widespread employment.

The Chief Minister and I used to meet the French Ambassador. We also called on GoI Ordnance Factory heads with a view to locate one in Pondy. A Free Port was also being talked about then. Finally, we met the National Small Industries Corporation and they suggested an Industries Intensive Campaign in Pondy and the GoI Secretary, Industries, himself came down. Many small scale industries were established this way.

Meanwhile, the International Fair was announced in Madras. When I mooted the idea of participation because Pondy was already "a window to France", it was accepted by the Chambers of Commerce, the Aurobindo Ashram who had their own small industries and many other units. They all made our participation possible. The International Trade Fair was inaugurated by the then CM of Tamil Nadu, C.N. Annadurai. Pondy’s Lieutenant Governor, Dr. G Sundaram, IAS (Retd) at 4:30 pm, and one and all chided me for convening such an important meeting during Rahukalam! I trust such attitudes have not changed now!

Not sensing the problems they may pose to the other occupants, they begin the work. As days pass by, suggestions from the other members of the family-young and old-pour in. The renovation bug grows bigger and bites the owner-his purse and otherwise. Breaking down existing walls result in dust and broken stones. There is noise pollution as well. The owner turns a deaf ear to appeals from neighbours, as he is totally involved in his project of renovation.

Renovation is necessary, but it has to be limited in a flat. Renovation could be total in a separate building. There too, neighbour’s convenience has to be kept in view by containing noise and dust by barriers and not working during nights.

Moreover, harmony is disturbed because the total-renovator of a flat does not live there. A partial renovator causes less nuisance because his programme is limited, and not total, unlike the big renovator. Any resident in a multi-storeyed flat should have some ‘sense and sensibility’ and not resort to such horrors!

Lakshmi Sundaram

The Horrors of Highrise

Saw your editorial “The Horrors of Highrise”. I highlight a frequent problem we face in many highrises after construction. Owners, of an independent portion or a flat in a multi-storied apartment building, after a period, get an urge to renovate.

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Lakshmi Sundaram

Website Comments

Heritage Watch: A Farewell to Kuralagam?
(Vol. XXXIV No. 6, July 1-15, 2024)

Kuralagam and Ethilagam on Kamarajar Salai were constructed around the same time in late 1960s and stood as landmark buildings of that era. The Navarathri Kolu doll sale in Kuralagam every year will be missing henceforth. Don’t know whether that area can withstand the pressure of a 21 storey building and the traffic that may emanate from its occupants. A rethink on the government side is required.

Parantharmani Mani
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The ‘Punch the Plastic’ (PTP) initiative was implemented as the plastic component of the We Segregate Project. The concept involves installing sharp curved hooks on apartment walls specifically designed to collect low-grade single-use plastic waste. “It is a challenge for each household to collect sufficient quantities of such plastics and give it to an aggregator. With the PTP initiative, we can collect in bulk and give it directly to the aggregators,” highlighted P. Saranya, Treasurer of ROKA. – (Courtesy: Adyar Times.)

ROKA amazes international delegations with its efforts in solid waste management in Chennai

The Urban Ocean programme, run jointly by Ocean Conservancy, Resilient Cities Network and The Circulate Initiative, is actively combating plastic pollution using a blend of upstream and downstream strategies. They collaborate with stakeholders from diverse sectors including construction, technology, education, urban management, and the informal waste sector.

During the Urban Ocean Conclave, held from June 18 to 20, delegates from countries as far as Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, Thailand and Indonesia participated, apart from domestic representation from Karnataka, Mumbai, Pune and Surat. On June 18, the event was graced by Supriya Sahu, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary (Environment Climate Change & Forests). She explained the various efforts taken by the government of Tamil Nadu to protect the environment: Green cover mission, Coastal mission, Climate change mission, Wetlands mission etc.

On June 19, Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner, Dr. R. Radhakrishnan, IAS, appreciated the efforts of the Urban Ocean programme and stated that such summits were essential to brainstorm and come up with ideas to combat plastic pollution.

On both days, experts shared their experiences and the possible way forward. The key highlight was, however, the pilot visit to the neighbourhood of Kasturba Nagar, held on June 20.

Residents of Kasturba Nagar Association (ROKA) has collaborated effectively with Okapi Research and Advisory (IIT Madras incubated) to spearhead comprehensive waste management initiatives, through the We Segregate Project. Together, they have implemented innovative strategies to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility within the community. Their partnership not only addresses waste management challenges but also educates residents on the importance of recycling and reducing their carbon footprint.

By fostering community engagement and leveraging expertise from these organisations, ROKA continues to make significant strides in creating a cleaner and greener environment for all residents of Kasturba Nagar.

A short introductory video highlighting the local area, providing context for the visit, the visitors explored the locality to understand its sustainable waste management practices. The visit aimed to foster knowledge exchange and inspire similar initiatives in different urban settings facing similar challenges.

The delegation got to see the different types of lane composters installed in the locality. Visitors were impressed by the meticulous maintenance of the composters and the collaborative efforts of the community. Their enthusiasm stemmed from observing how these methods effectively managed organic waste, fostering admiration for the cooperative spirit and dedication to sustainable practices within the vicinity. They also visited several apartments in the neighbourhood to experience a terrace kitchen garden and understand effective techniques to implement source segregation.
Climate change is a burning issue today. Everyone at- tention is focused on it. It is no wonder we are in the midst of a crisis — the world is warming up at an unprecedented rate, and the present-day thinking that climate change is a re- cent phenomenon is a misconception. The climate change is a problem facing the world. The problem is not new, but it is getting worse. The problem is getting worse at an alarming rate. The problem is getting worse at a faster rate than ever before. The problem is getting worse at a rate that is unprecedented. The problem is getting worse at a rate that is unprecedented in human history. The problem is getting worse at a rate that is unprecedented in human history.

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Historical record of climate change on the Coromandel Coast*

by Anantanarayanan Raman

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The history of climate change on the Coromandel has been well documented in several studies. The major strength of S.J.S.'s book is its comprehensive list of references, which should be useful to many scientists and science historians of southern India, and perhaps other regions as well. The book is a valuable contribution to understanding the history of climate change in southern India. The book is a valuable contribution to understanding the history of climate change in southern India.

The Esplanade(s) of Madras

The Esplanade today is a short stretch of road going south from NSC Bose Road and ending at the intersection of Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer and North Fort Roads. It is architecturally a magnificent mile for it has the Rajam Annamalai Mar, the South India Chamber of Commerce Building, Madras (now Chennai) House which was once Burma Shell Headquarters, the United India Insurance (now LIC) Building and Kuralagam. On the opposite side is the compound wall of the Law College, with the Yale Monument inside it. But a century or so ago, this alone was not the Esplanade. There was a Western Esplanade, a Northern Esplanade, a Benfield Esplanade, a Fort Esplanade, a Hospital Esplanade, an Evening Bazaar Esplanade and a Monument Esplanade. The history of these stretches is confusing to say the least and is made worse by the fact that those names and indeed those spaces do not exist any longer. This article is an attempt at unravelling our city’s evolution of Esplanades.

The Oxford English dictionary defines the Esplanade as a long, open, level area, typically beside the sea, along which people may walk for pleasure. It is also an open, level space separating a fortress from a town. Though Madras, and in particular George Town is very much by the sea, it is in the context of the second meaning that we need to look at our Esplanades. There were two significant decisions of the East India Company that gave rise to them.

The first of these concerned the demolition of old Black Town in the 1750s and encouraging those evicted to settle in Muthialpet and Peddamakkenpet, both of which became new Black Town (and from 1905 known as George Town). Old Black Town as we know it, cultivated by the side of the northern boundary of Fort St George and when it was emptied, the vast open space left behind became the Fort Esplanade. As is well known, a series of boundary pillars was erected in 1773 on the northern side of this area, to indicate that construction was forbidden to the south of it. Of these, the sole remnant is the pillar standing in the shadow of Dare House and tended to by the Maragappa Group. The road that came up between the pillars and Fort Esplanade was named Esplanade Road. It was also referred to as Chins Bazaar Road, both names being used at least till 1939. It was only in 1946 that this became NSC Bose Road. Interestingly, until the 1880s, it was also known as Popham’s Esplanade, owing to Popham’s Broadway (now Prakasam Salai) intersecting with it. Evening Bazaar Road leads off China Bazaar Road even today to the General Hospital and it would be reasonable to assume that this was the Evening Bazaar Esplanade.

Fort Esplanade, by its very definition, followed the contours of the Fort. It comprised an enormous parcel of land, bounded by what is today NSC Bose Road on the North, Evening Bazaar Road on the West, North Fort Road on the South and Rajaji Salai on the East. Within it today we have an astonishing collection of institutions and their buildings – the High Court, the Law College, the edifices on Esplanade Road listed earlier, the Broadway Bus Terminus, the Madras United Club, the Madras Medical College hostels, the Government Dental College and the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission. It is interesting to reflect that until the 1880s, there was nothing here barring the Yale Monument aka Hynner’s Obelisk and its neighbour, the now-vanished Powney family vault. It is no wonder therefore that the road that cut across the Esplanade by the Hymner Obelisk came to be known as the Monument Esplanade. It was also known as Western Esplanade until the 1940s, as it runs along the western face of the fort.

If these Esplanades came about due to the decision to Old Black Town, another set came up owing to the scheme in the 1760s of building a protective wall around new Black Town. HD Love in his Nadi Public Service Commission 1883-1884 states that a new line of fire and these became the Northern and Western Esplanades of the Town. By the 19th century, with all threats of war having receded, these spaces were eyed for development. The southern half of Western Esplanade became the People’s Park and the northern half was made into Salt Courts. It is interesting to note that many of the historic buildings that came to be built on People’s Park are actually standing on what was once Western Esplanade.

Northern Esplanade was absorbed into Royapuram and today houses the Stanley Medical College and much of the Railway establishment there, including the historic station. It is significant to note that just as in the case of the Fort Esplanade, there was a line of boundary pillars here as well, the last survivors of which were found a decade ago in the Washermanpet Police Station and a jewellery shop!

We now come to the Benfield Esplanade and this is rather tricky to identify. The Administration Report of the Corporation of Madras dating to 1901/1902 states that a new road, “named Moore’s Road” was opened across Benfield Esplanade, connecting Fraser’s Road near Popham’s Esplanade with the General Hospital Road near Memorial Hall at the cost of the South Indian Railway, owing to the great inconvenience felt by the public by the constant locking of the gates at the level crossing on Benfield Esplanade and General Hospital Road”. This seems to have been a short-lived thoroughfare for street directories of the 1930s do not make any mention of Moore’s Road here and the SIR level crossing is back in full force. However, it can be seen that the General Hospital Road was a short stretch of what is Periyar EVR Road, leading from the Fort to GH. Even today the name survives and this was probably the General Hospital Esplanade.

Benfield Esplanade was a nearby open expanse, named after that notoriously corrupt contractor Paul Benfield. In today’s terms it would mean much of Fort Station and the surrounding areas. What is today Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer Road was once known as Benfield’s Road. Muthuswami Bridge was constructed to allow easy access of traffic and prevent stoppages owing to the railway lines that run below it. The Fort’s Wallajah Gate opens on to this road and thus Benfield’s Road became Wallajah Road as well. There were therefore two Wallajah Roads in the city – the one on the Esplanade, which is now lost and the other in Triplicane which still survives. Most of us who research this city have equated the latter with Benfield Road and we could not have been more wrong. Paul Benfield, in life, in death, and after seems to have caused a lot of confusion.
Look at me... Now!

Click. A picture of a sambar-vadai.
Message: ‘Enjoying the world’s most delicious vadai ... doesn’t everything taste better when eaten with friends question mark-question
mark-exclamation-exclamation-heart-heart-heart.’
Everyone is smiling into the camera, and you notice the sambar vadai is smoking too.
And why not? It’s just won the world championship.
Click.
A foot encased in blingy footwear. Message: ‘All set for my cousin’s mehendi!’
Okay – first point: You can’t help thinking that that one foot alone can probably light up a stadium, and secondly: The owner of that foot is a complete stranger, and now there’s a mysterious ‘cousin’? But hey, somewhere out there is a mehendi. Have fun – whoever you are.
Click.
A cat on its back soaking up sun beside me. Of bread, a jug of wine and thou...
Khayyam had a cat-in-the-sun.*

And look at this montage... This person is drinking coffee looking to her right, looking to her left, standing up striking an attitude, sitting down striking an attitude, looking straight at the camera, now over her shoulder holding cup in extended hand, now climbing up the stairs, now down the stairs, all the while drinking coffee, drinking coffee, drinking coffee... dear God, seriously? What next?
100 photos that show the hundred stages of paint drying?

This is the way we comb our hair.
This is the way we wear our deliberately casual footwear, walk down the road, buy potatoes, drink a glass of water...
This is the way we live our lives in a laaargge glass bowl..."
And it isn't just about living – voluntarily – in a glass bowl. It's entire lives in a permanent state of bubbling-over fizz on parade.

‘Bestest’, ‘most fantastic’, ‘amazing’, ‘thrilling’... don't these people ever get tired of being a particularly brilliant shade of ‘Rani-pink’ all the live-long day?
This isn’t just a human problem.
This click and share culture has made mannequins of everyone... and everything.

Members of other species, and even inmates of the inanimate world, have gone all pose-y and cutesy on us.
Your dog now feels injured if you don’t click him at least 57 times a day.
“What? Suddenly I am not ‘sweet’ enough for you?” he growls, indicating with a dramatic gesture that he needs to see his pet psychiatrist at once.
(And that’s just another photo op, isn’t it?)*

As for cats – don’t even start.
You walk past one sunning itself on your garden wall, (and you know how cats are... they’ll sneer at you in your own home like you are the trespasser), and this cat, who was all along just flopping on the wall in a bindas, boneless manner, suddenly straightens up and tries to look about ten times cuter than it actually is.

A side-table, in a deep silk because pictures of her ‘soon-to-be-nonsense’ look have yet to be posted, moves away in a marked manner, which explains why your tumbler of steaming hot filter coffee fell mysteriously to the floor yesterday. Your latest outfit tries to whack you in the face with a sleeve, reminding you that it is still waiting to appear on that famous sharing-platform-you-must-be-seen-on-24/7.

Just landed after a long flight? Well, you’d better look picture-perfect. How else will your ‘Airport-Look’ get a million likes? (And that’s another thing – as if Life isn’t competitive enough, the human race has devised one more reason to feel shortchanged.)

Ordered a fancy drink? Click.
Tried a new dish? Click.
Holidaying somewhere exotic? Or not – preferring to go all undiscovered and spartan? Click.
At home, everyday-fare is now refusing to come to the table unless they are dressed up all fancy-like, and all cell phones are ready to click.

“We want to be called something nice too,” they demand, “Like ‘soul food’ or ‘nurturing’...” and while you’re at it, please look up the dictionary. ‘Homey’ doesn’t always mean what you think it does.*

Even babies arrive all photo-friendly these days.
As for Nature – She defines beauty anyway, but these days is quick to feel injured if she isn’t being clicked at all the time. And if Nature is a touch disgruntled? Trouble with a capital ‘T’.

No one’s getting the wrong idea.
No one’s being a crusty ludit-duit of a curmudgeon here.
(And yes, everyone knows ‘Click’ no longer applies in this particular context, but hey, it’s just symbolic, ok? And yes, a simple solution is to just shut your eyes and ears to all this din. Agreed.)

Agreed too that there’s lots of good stuff out there – fun, serious, thought-provoking, informative, life-lesson-y... lovely to share – great to look at.

It’s the obsessive, relentless ‘I exist therefore I click and share’ school of thought that can get a bit much at times. (So please put away those sticks and stones, thank you.)

Click, click, click – camouflage the tick-tack-tick-tack of your life, don’t it?
You take your cell phone out of your bag to make a call.
Wait a minute.
Did that 10-month-old just lean out of its stroller and wink at you?

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— THE EDITOR
When Olympians blessed a Madras stadium

When Olympians blessed a Madras stadium

Now that the Olympics are just around the corner, we showcase a stadium in the city whose inauguration was blessed by three Olympians.

It was in 1889 that the Madras Government constructed the Pudupet Reserve Police Lines — a series of quarters for the constabulary, at a cost of Rs 31,336. The land fronting it was given over to the police on 5 October 1890. In 1900 it was used as an open-air hospital but at all other times it was given over to the police. The Governor invariably inspected the police parade at the Pudupet Maidan.

With police sports meets becoming sporadic in the 1930s and Vellore being the location as and when they were held, it was only in 1954 that plans were once again gained ground for a police stadium. As a result of the decision taken by the Inspector General of Police the Annual State Police Sports of 1954 was held in Madras for the first time ever. That meant a cinder track had to be prepared at the Pudupet Maidan. This was done by the police themselves by October. For this purpose a huge depression measuring about 100 yards by 50 yards on the southern end of the ground was first filled and levelled up. It was an immense task which was, however, tackled efficiently and speedily by the officers and men of the City Police. That it was well done was proved by the fact that despite heavy rains the level of the track remained unaffected.

The track was inaugurated by the Rev. Bob Richards, World Olympic Pole-Vaulting Champion. He cut a tape and then ran on the track, accompanied by applause from the spectators. At the end of his run he complimented the police on preparing “one of the fastest tracks in India.”

A little prior to this, Richards also delivered a talk at the City Police Recreation Club. And it is best we quote from Arul himself —

“A little earlier Reverend Bob Richards, who has been humorously described as the person who is trying to jump to heaven on his own efforts, gave a most enlightening talk on athletics in the City Police Recreation Club. He said that one of the most important things for men and women to learn in sport is to discipline desires; such discipline would give them the power to live a clean life. Secondly, sports taught the principle of hard work. He himself had put in 8000 hours of pole vaulting since the time he began jumping as a boy of 12. He believed in the saying that “Genius is 99 per cent perspiration and 1 per cent inspiration”. Thirdly, he called upon all athletes to have faith in themselves. Even though the so-called experts had told him that he lacked the height, strength and speed to jump even 14 feet he had by faith in himself jumped 15 feet 43/4 inches to create a new world Olympic record. He concluded his address with an inspiring appeal to athletes to rely on The Power greater than their own.”

The Annual State Police Sports Meet began on October 17th but was dogged by bad weather right through, resulting in many postponements of events. It was only by mid-December that all competitions concluded. It was at the valedictory that talk turned towards a stadium, chiefly propelled by the then IG – VR Rajarathinam. Work began thereafter and the City Police Stadium was complete by 1957. By the early 1970s, the stadium was named after the IGP who mooted and pushed for its construction – VR. Rajarathinam.

Even while work was in progress, the cinder track notchup further claims to fame – in 1955, Jesse Owens and Bob Mathias ran on it as well. Owens is of course too well known to need an introduction here. Robert Bruce (Bob) Mathias was an American decathlete and won two gold medals at the decathlon, one each in the 1948 and 1952 Summer Olympics. He later took to politics and served for four terms as a Republican in the House of Representatives.

– Reproduced from Kaaval, A History of the Tamil Nadu Police, by Sriram V.