

GNC

CONNECT

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3
MARCH 2015

FOR MEMBERS OF THE GANDHINAGAR CLUB ONLY

PICK OF *Summer*

ART AND CULTURE

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DEAR MEMBERS,

GNC Connect is now into its third issue and I'm very happy that we're seeing increased

response from members by way of articles being contributed towards the magazine. There have been requests for more food related articles in GNC Connect, especially recipes, so we will make a conscious effort to include more of these in future issues. As always, member articles are welcome and are to be mailed to gandhinagarclub@gmail.com.

An update on the Library: I've brought in a new system of procuring books

on a monthly basis to ensure that the books purchased reflect our readers interests. Lists of new/ popular books for members & children are received from two suppliers at the start of every month. Members of the sub committee and a few regulars at the Library then go over this list and based on their recommendation, books are purchased. If members would like to go through this list and make a few suggestions, do not hesitate to ask the Librarian. Your suggestions can be entered into the suggestion book (also available with the Librarian) and will be actioned upon.

Finally, I'm very happy to share that the long awaited addition to the club, the Children's Play Area, has taken shape and has been formally opened a few weeks back.

This was one of our pet projects and we look forward to having the facility well utilised and encouraging more families to spend time at the club.

And the next time you think of hosting a birthday party for your child, you won't have to look much further than GNC – a fun play area + tasty treats from our Club Kitchen will ensure that your kids and their friends have a great time.

Thank you, once again, to all the contributors to GNC Connect for their articles and to Edge Design House, for putting together this very classy magazine.

Best Regards,
 KP Balakumar – (B103)
 Member in Charge: Magazine, Website, Library and PR

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Dear Members,

The General Committee extends its best thanks to all members for their continued support to all the activities of the club. Starting from attendance at the entertainment programs to usage of facilities & caterings services, there has been an appreciable increase. Efforts are on to improve the standards of service. It will not be long before it rises to highly satisfactory levels. The enthusiasm to take on development activities continues to be on a high. The pace with which we would have liked to move on is a little slower. Reason – works are being taken up and executed without closing facilities or causing major inconveniences to its usage. We hope to complete most tasks in a similar manner. Do bear with us for minor discomforts.

By the end of March the Annual maintenance of the swimming pool, renovation of conference halls and guesthouse are targeted for completion. As a measure to augment additional revenues and optimize expenditure, plans are on to make the restaurant available for private luncheon parties on weekdays. Likewise bar services in the afternoon may be relocated since the usage is minimal. This would help in reduced electricity and maintenance costs. Few of the staff are also being given either additional

responsibilities or reshuffled to fill up vacancies. New recruitments are done only in case of extreme necessity.

Website development has been taken up. New & dynamic website will be shortly launched with a host of interactive features. The entrance used by the staff is proposed to be shifted from the existing 4th Main road since it is creating disturbance to the Guest House and also proper security checks are not being able to be carried out. Provision for entry for staff would be created from the main entrance of the club and security checks would be placed at the existing room that is available in the south west side (inside compound area). This would ensure that the entrance



of 4th Main Road is restricted only for Guest House occupancy and for transportation of materials to the Club.

The recently inaugurated Kids play area has been a great hit. It's gladdening to note that all programs aimed at participation from children and the youth have met with tremendous response. Full credit to the Children & Youth of our club the New Year Eve, Christmas; Pongal & Family Nite celebrations were a resounding success. Photographs published alongside will make us all very happy. It encourages us to go ahead and open up the exciting new ideas in Youth club. Pongal Celebrations was a revelation. The color, gaiety, and decorations were simply outstanding. Performance by professionals rendering,



folk dances, Oilattam, Karakattam, Mailyattam and other stage shows were purely traditional and spell binding. The toast of the day was the Songs rendered by our Children. There were so many willing kids but we had to restrict due to paucity of time. Our sincere apologies to the disappointed children, we will make it up shortly. Watch out for invitations.

The FAMILY NITE even held on February 24th was so different and refreshing. Programs were held for all age groups and the participation was fun filled. Tombola, Family quiz, Fun Games, DISCO Music & dance held on the day, invited interest and participation amongst many members spouses & kids as well. Attractive prizes & gifts were distributed. Srividya Mahesh made the event memorable with her compeering. She has been a pillar in all our programs and we thank her for the wholehearted support. To lend greater variety, food menu has been tailored to suit occasions.



It was gladdening to note that members in general are very happy with the spreads being given at very reasonable costs. Response to Sunday Lunch buffet is encouraging. Quality of Food in recent times has gained widespread appreciation and the Committee member in charge is pursuing improvements in Service too.



The stand out happening of January & February was the meritorious performance of our cricket team in all the tournaments participated. In the most prestigious Singaram trophy our club reached the finals and put up a spirited show before going down that too only on account of a rain curtailed match. The team also reached the semi finals in four other tournaments. Kudos to the team lead by Mahesh, our entertainment committee member and Murukesan, a passionate sports enthusiast. Special thanks to all those members, present during the matches to encourage our team. We had the opportunity to meet with all our team members for a group photograph and the Runner up trophy. Their exuberance and confidence was indeed heart warming. Three cheers to Gandhinagar Club Cricket team. To add more glitter in the coming months, the Sports Committee Member and his team have planned to conduct inter Club tournaments in Tennis, Shuttle Badminton, Snooker & billiards. Sponsors to the event have also been identified.

New equipments have been added to the gym. Usage of PDA for Bar & Catering Services has been implemented in full swing and have started yielding desired results. We are working on to introduce the PDA for Parcel & Party orders too. This would eliminate manual KOT system & help us go on line.

New Cleaning equipments have been purchased. Currently it's been put to use in full swing at the Guest House and the results are heartening. Staff to be trained and to carry out the work in the Club is in the process of being shortlisted. We hope to reduce the human interface by half and thereby reduction in costs by around 35 to 40%. The member in charge, amidst demanding tasks being carried out in Maintenance deserves mention for the efforts.

In the Month of March the Annual Budget for the financial year 2015-16 has to be presented to the General Body for its approval. The date for the EGM has been fixed on 22/03/2015. It's our sincere request that all members come to the EGM and participate in this most important exercise that determines the spending for the entire year.

The General Committee is also working on preparing a document on the "Financial status of the club – Challenges and imperatives in the year 2020". Once ready, will be circulated amongst members for perusal & discussions and placed before the General Body for its decision.

Looking forward to large participation in the EGM to be held for passing the Annual Budget and in the preparation of the 'Financial Document'.

Thanks
Ashok Sarrangan – Secretary
(AI29)

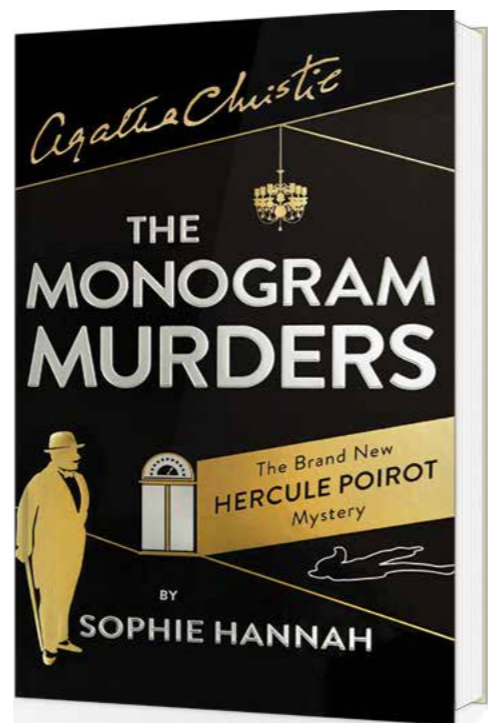
THE BOOKWORM DIARIES



Thanvi Srikanth (S563)

It's been quite a few years since I last read those thrilling lines of mystery from one of my all-time-favourite authors. In a sudden pursuit to relive those childhood days, I walked into our club library only to find what I was looking for, among the latest arrivals.

*A novel of the Great Dame, **Agatha Christie**.*



The book I picked, named 'The Monogram Murders', is written by best-seller Sophie Hannah. Unsure of whether this new author would live up to the standards of the original storyteller, I decided to take my chances. Here's an honest review of what this novel delivers.

Like any other, this Hercule Poirot mystery is gripping and extremely fast-paced. (Fast is an understatement. To my own surprise, I finished this book in a record time of five hours!)

THE PLOT:

When three guests are astonishingly found murdered in an identical fashion, in different floors of the Bloxom Hotel in London, former detective Monsieur Poirot and his friend Edward Catchpool from the Scotland Yard, are called to investigate. A few plausible suspects and ideas are discussed, but like any other detective story, there arise more questions than answers. From monogrammed cufflinks located in the mouths of the victims, to stories of revenge and severed relationships that go back 16 years into the past, the plot is ingenious enough to keep the reader on his toes.

FROM THE CRITIC'S ANGLE:

Though the entire story is in fact, a recollection of events by detective Catchpool, the narrative frequently appears to shift towards Poirot. Yet, the reader is not biased, and is made to look at the other characters objectively.

In a very clever manner, the author makes you feel like an amateur who is completely lost, struggling to find a connection between the victims, while the experienced person watches you from a distance.

"If you do not consider the unlikeliest of possibilities, you will not be the best detective you can be", says Poirot as he encourages you to keep trying, while he's solved the mystery already. I found it very similar to the frustration students often face while writing a test under the watchful eyes of a smirking examiner.

What makes this story unique is the number of clues and facts that present themselves before you even divulge into the periphery of the problem. In a fleeting moment, there are many characters introduced, many nonchalant words uttered (which you suspect, will definitely hold some vital piece of information later on), and many

differently angled interpretations of the same scene. This feature has proved to be both an asset as well as the letdown of the book.

With too much information at your disposal, the only way onwards, is forwards. Your powers to make a doggy ear and close the book, fail repeatedly, as you find yourself fighting sleep to know who the murderer is. That is the kind of desperation that the author creates, which I found remarkable. At this juncture, it must be said that this feature fails for the category of readers who are easily confused and impatient.

In an attempt to recreate the original Agatha Christie style, Sophie Hannah might have gone a tad overboard, with her description of Hercule Poirot's persona. Nevertheless, credit must be given for choosing a mundane plot, but twisting it enough for you to appreciate the simplicity of the truth behind it.

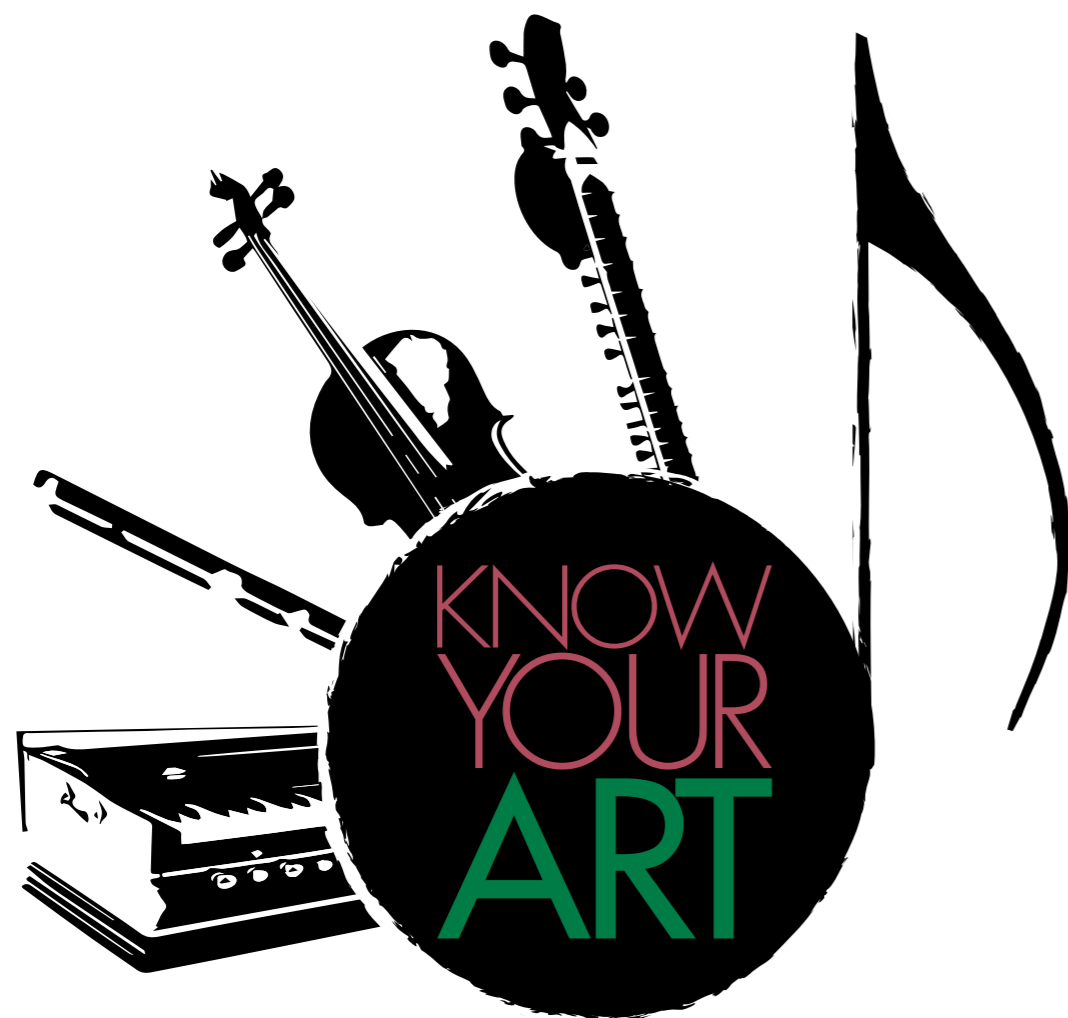
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THE BASE FOR FILM MUSIC IS CARNATIC

Mrs. Sowmya Kumar Arjun (A105)

The writer links popular songs from the movies to their classical roots. Read on to make the connect

Before I know, it's time for the next issue! I got some feedback that a few wanted to know about how film music connects with classical, a few about instruments, while others wanted me to continue with the next in the traditional arts: dance.

So to sort of continue with the chain of thought I will write about how one can make the connect with film music.

Why is film music so popular and why is Carnatic not mass? Well, aren't all classical arts elite? But, then, some ask, why can't we make it more mass? Then the classical aspect goes, doesn't it? It becomes too clichéd. We don't want everything classical to be understood by the masses. We want to keep something a secret where only a few of the audience would discern and say sabash! The others would look around at that knowledgeable mama or maami with newfound respect!

Have you ever observed the audience in any entertainment programme?

I always do, be it a classical music concert, a light music programme or an English '80s music show at Museum Theatre and so on. The audiences are very different. Why? What differentiates them?

The below is entirely my opinion only. Sometimes, Carnatic music audiences have a know-it-all attitude. They would like to convey that 'I follow Carnatic music, I follow an elite art.' If I were to dissect these people, I would say they are those who have a certain discipline in their daily routine as well, drink their morning tumbler of coffee, go for a walk,

read the daily newspaper without fail, want to know the latest in Mylapore happenings and prefer early evenings with an early dinner so they can get up early the next day for the same routine.

The film song listening crowd on the other hand is more laidback, like the easy Listening and would probably not mind the late night because that is when most light music events are held in general.

If we were to draw a Venn diagram, there is a very marginal crowd that would come at the intersection, that may like both equally. And, even in that case, the classical music people would prefer the old-time hits of the '70s rather than appreciate the latest Tamil flick hits. Why? Because the old-time film hits were mostly classical in nature!

While on the whole it is easy for a classical person to understand film music, the other way around is difficult. So, how can we try and bridge the gap for those who would like to go from the film to the classical music kingdom? Well, let us see how we can link some tunes from the film to some tunes from the classical and do 'match the following'.

In classical music, we have some important ragams. What are ragams? They are the basic notes that form a tune. There are 7 basic notes in Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Da Ni. In English music Do Re Me Fa So La Ti. In that while the S and P are constant and do not change (English: Do and So), the others have variations. Think of the black keys in the piano/ keyboard. So for the other notes, we have 3 each of the R, G & D and 2 each of the M, N.

Just imagine the number of permutations and combinations possible! There are ragams with all 7 notes up and 7 notes down. And these are called Melakartha Ragams. They are known as the mother

ragams or Janani Ragams. All these 72 have mini ragams derived from it....and these are called child ragams or Janya Ragams. So the possibilities are endless! There are still some who are inventing new ragams to this day and Sri Balamuralikrishna, the great singer, has invented quite a few.

Now, keeping the above in mind, let us take a few ragams for starters. **Sankarabaranam:** The basic Do Re Me of English. If you are familiar with the movie Sound of Music you would know this song by heart. This is your basic Sankarabaranam, which in the literal sense in Sanskrit means the aabaranam or the jewels of Lord Sankara or Shiva. Some popular songs in Carnatic in this ragam are Manasu Swadina (Thyagaraja); Akshaya Linga(Dikshidar); Saroja Dala Netri (Shyama Sastri).

Kalyani: film songs that are popular are Amma endru azaikaadha, janani janani jagam nee agam nee, kalaivaaniye unnai taane arule. Do hum it and see if you can sing this. You can make out the similarity in the tunes of these film songs. Some popular Kalyani numbers in Carnatic are nidhi chaala sukham (Thyagaraja); birana vara lichi (Shayama Sastri); unnai allal vera gathi (Papanasam Sivan).

Vasanta: a happy ragam, literally meaning spring in Sanskrit, has a beautiful film song andhi mazhai pozhigiradhu. A Diskhidar song, Ramachandram Bhavayaami, a Purandara Dasa song aama raama adds to the beauty of the Vasanta.

Reethigowlai: A more recent favourite of mine, kangal irundal from the movie Subramaniapuram is set in the ragam Reethigowlai.

Considered a heavy ragam in Carnatic, it has been set beautifully in this song. Some pieces in the same ragam in Carnatic are Nannu vidachi kada or Janani ninnu vinaa (both Thyagaraja compositions).

When you have the time, do google the above songs and listen to both the film and the Carnatic songs. You can then proudly say you have four ragams under your belt!

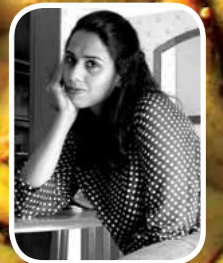
More in the next issue. Do write to me at sowmyakumar2002@yahoo.com for any feedback. I do look forward to hearing from you.



Sowmya Kumar Arjun is a Carnatic music vocalist / Bharatanatyam dancer & runs a gallery, Chaya, with her mother, which combines their passion for traditional arts and creativity)

PONGAL CELEBRATION AT GNC





Rashmee Gopalan (R296)

INGREDIENTS:**(MAKES 8 ROLLS)**

Plain Flour(maida)- 3 cups
 Warm Water- 1 cup
 Active dry Yeast- 1tbsp
 Salt - 1tsp
 Sugar- 2 tbsps
 Extra Virgin Olive Oil- 2-3 tbsps
 Grated cheese – 1cup
 Pesto sauce – 1cup
 Black sliced olives-1cup
 Milk –few teaspoons
 Sesame seeds – few teaspoons
 Butter – to grease pans

METHOD:

- Proof the yeast in the warm water to which sugar has been added. It should bubble and froth after 5-10 minutes. If it hasn't, start all over again with new yeast.
- Add this to the rest of the ingredients and knead till you get a smooth dough .The dough should spring back when you press with your finger.
(Add flour ,a cup at a time. If the dough is too sticky, add some more flour,if the dough is too dry, add more water or oil)
- Apply oil to a large vessel and allow to rise for 40-45 minutes. At the end of this, the dough will be double its initial size.
- Knock down the air in the dough and divide the dough into two equal portions.
- Grease a baking pan or loaf tin with butter.

- Roll the dough into a rough rectangle using a rolling pin. Apply flour to prevent sticking. The rolled out dough must be at least half inch thick.
- Apply a thin ,even layer of pesto sauce on it. Sprinkle olives.
- Roll it and cut it into two equal parts and further cut the two parts into two, so that you get 4 equal rolls.
- Now place the rolls with the cut side up in the greased pan.
- Repeat the same procedure for the remaining dough.
- Apply the balance pesto on top and apply milk. Sprinkle grated cheese and sesame seeds (optional)
- Allow to proof for another 20 minutes.
- In the mean time preheat the oven to 180 degree C.
- Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown
- Allow to cool and serve.

TIP: Bread making involves a lot of technique in the kneading of the dough. Do watch U-tube videos on how to knead dough for bread.

PESTO SAUCE**INGREDIENTS:**

Basil leaves - 2 cups
 Walnuts – 1 cup
 Garlic – 4 pods
 Olive oil – ¼ cup
 Parmesan cheese – 3 tbsps
 Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD:

Pulse together all ingredients to a smooth paste in a blender.

MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS



In the REGATTA NIGHT held by Royal Madras Yacht Club, on 24th January 2015, our members and children had participated and won 2nd prize.

Capt.Vivek Shanbhag V312
Mr.Abhishek Karthikeyan K263
Mr.Sundara Krishnan S729.



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ACES ALL THE WAY!

INTERVIEW WITH
Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan

Thanvi Srikant (S563)

Be it a weekday or a weekend, our club's tennis courts are always occupied by enthusiasts of all ages, clearly a sign of how much the sport means to us. It might surprise you to know that one of our own members is representing the Indian Squad for the Davis Cup today.

At 26, he has won several ITF Mens-Pro Circuit titles and was even selected to play at the Aircel Chennai Open last year. Currently ranked 260 (doubles) and 380 (singles) by ATP, this talented

sportstar, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, tells Club Connect about his journey so far, and why tennis gives him happiness.

CC: When did your passion for tennis begin? How did it change from a hobby to a career option?

JN: I was five years old when my grandfather introduced me to the game. As I grew older and was coached, I began enjoying the game.

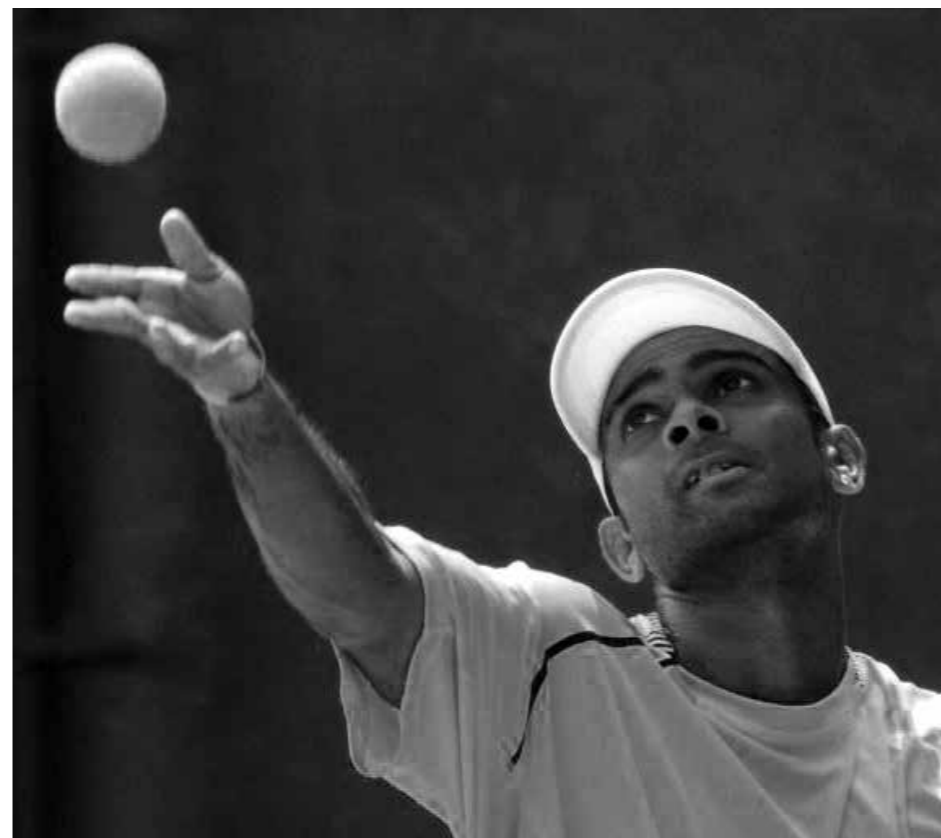
At 11, I took it seriously enough to compete professionally. After my 10th grade, I was qualified to play for ITF Juniors (International tennis tournaments). Though I was

going to pursue higher studies, I was keen on achieving great heights in my tennis career.

CC: For any sportsperson, the losses teach you more than the wins. Do you agree?

JN: Definitely. I still remember playing a tournament in Indonesia when I was 14. I was among the chosen few from Asia, and was competing to get selected for international tournaments.

It was a lot of pressure, and I lost in the quarterfinals after a close match. In my zeal to win and reach a certain level, I had forgotten how passionate I was about the game. It was a turning



point in my career and has taught me to a lot.

CC: Tennis, like any other sport isn't just about physical fitness, but is also about being mentally sharp and prepared. How do you beat all of this, and nervousness on the day of an important match?

JN: Everyone gets nervous. It's completely natural.

The trick is to accept it and channel the energy into giving your best for the game. If you still can't fight it, go through your routine normally, and don't think about the outcome.

CC: 2014 saw you reach your all-time high ATP rank in both the singles (293) and doubles (240) categories. How excited were you on receiving a wild card to play for the Aircel Chennai Open last year? Do share your experience with us.

JN: Yes, it was a great opportunity to play singles and doubles as well. My partner Balaji and I, put up a tough fight against the second seeds, but lost the match. Though I focus more on my singles game, I've started developing an interest for doubles too now.

CC: You began your training in Chennai, trained outside the country, and then enrolled into the University of Washington, Seattle on a Tennis Scholarship. Now being a role model for many youngsters in India, in what ways do you think the training system for tennis in our country can improve?

JN: During my undergrad in Seattle, I was pursuing a Major in Comparative History of Ideas (CHID) and also representing the University in tennis tournaments. With lectures for a few hours in the morning and training sessions in the afternoon, I could balance both efficiently. Matt Anger, my coach there, truly cared for me and trained me well. Unfortunately, we lack tennis academies and dedicated coaches, in India. Even the few centres which offer training, cannot transform you from a fierce competitor to a professional player. With the immense talent that we have, it would be really great to see an organised system emerge.



CC: Finally, what words of advice would you give to our budding tennis champs at GNC?

JN: Tennis is a very good career option, if you genuinely enjoy the sport and develop your talent. You will find opportunities to meet people and learn from them, travel to new places, and be financially secure too. It's a fruitful experience. After all, it's the journey that matters and not the destination.



MORE ABOUT JEEVAN

A tennis player he's inspired by: Lleyton Hewitt
Hobbies: Movies, gaming, spending time with friends
A sport he's eager to learn: Golf



THE GREAT TEMPLES OF TANJORE (TANJORE - TRICHY)

Anuradha Prashant (P242)

For the last two years, every night when I read a story to my 6 year old son, I would try and describe the visual beauty of the Chera, Chola and Pallava reign in Tamil Nadu. A child friendly homemade oral version of Ponnian selviyan, Narasimha Pallavar and the realization of a great dream - Parthiban Kannavu was simply not enough to kindle the visual imagery in the mind of a child reared on picnic drives along OMR, ECR and resort hotels parading as remnants of the great heritage.

So this December, we planned a trip to the great temples of the Chola reign across Tiruchirapalli and Tanjore. Covering the prominent ones just to get a glimpse of the wonders that were created more than 1000 years ago.

My son was excited about getting on to the train. (That he is an ardent train lover would only be an understatement). I was excited about getting back with my spouse and child to an enjoyable phase of my student days – Trichy. And so we left for Trichy by Rockfort express one Thursday night.

Covering the temple towns of SriRangam, Thiruvanaikaval, Samayapuram, Tanjore, Trichy, and the musical abode of Thiruvaiyar in 3 days was indeed a farfetched cry from resort bound vacations that we were used to.

The mysticism of Indian mythology lies in the magical blend of mysticism with reality. Huge temple complexes surrounded by fort towns resplendent in their timeless grandeur exist as testimonials to tales of mythology. The feeling of -could it have all really happened?



Did Andal actually marry Sri Ranganathar in this temple leaves you wanting for more out of these pilgrimage spots.

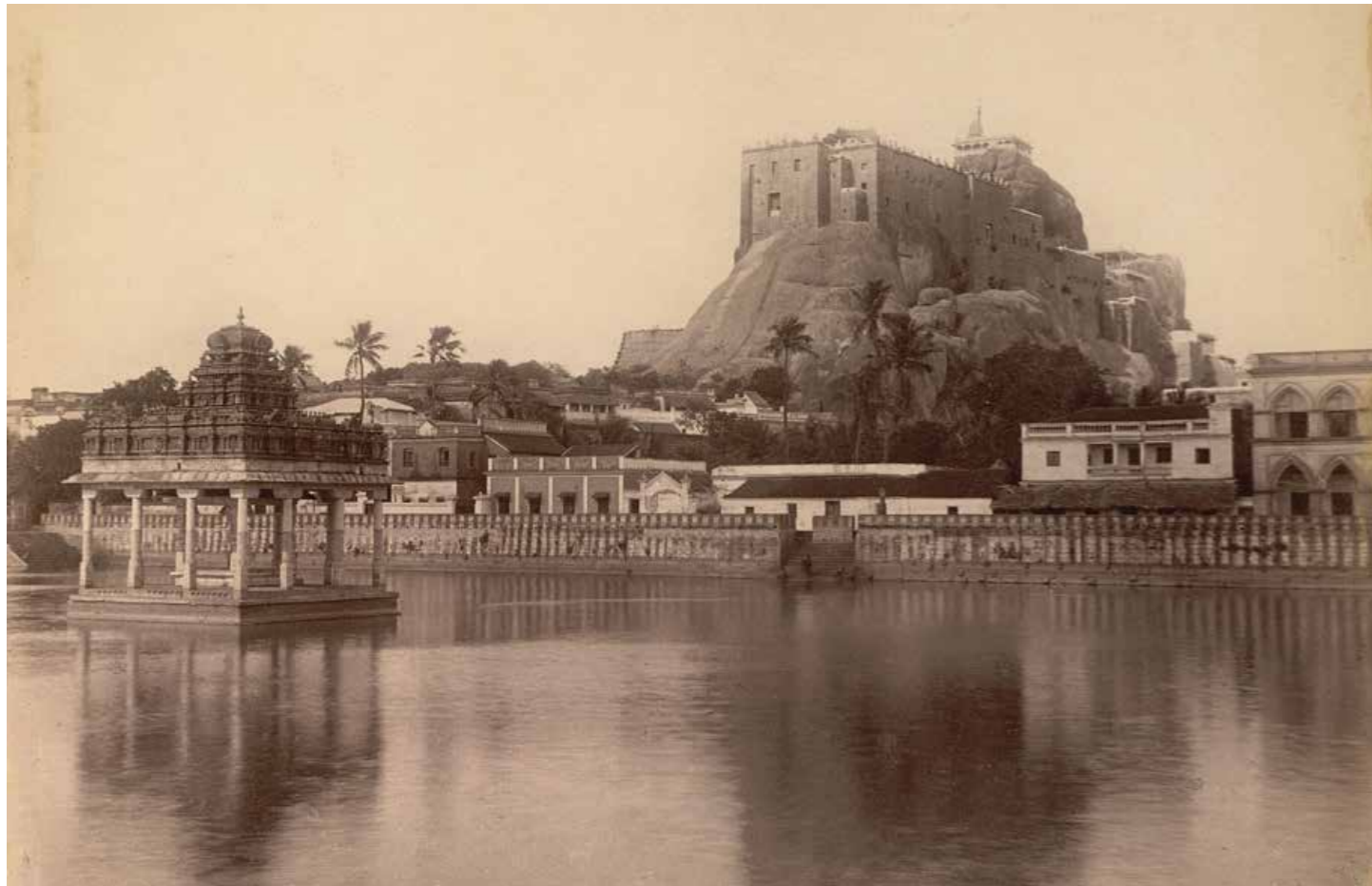
Crowds – both tourists, historians with scientific temper and devotees immersed in devotion through the thresholds of the temple leaving the administration at sea and us with some bitter sweet moments. However the darshan of the presiding deity wipes out all the tirades you may have stood up to in seconds. Call it positive energy within the sanctum, power of the unknown, achieving what you set out to accomplish or simply bhakthi - the feeling of completeness is felt by one and all exiting the premises.

Thiruvanaikkaval, Brihadeeshwara, Trichy Rockfort temple complex, Tanjore palace stand witness to tales of saivism sweeping the region during

the Cholas reign. Mammoth gopurams standing 20-30 ft tall, perfectly symmetrical, not casting a shadow, covered with intricate carvings of gods, nature and common man make us ponder on so many realities that time throws at us.

Equipped with knowledge and fertile imagination beyond “modern day gadgets” the sculptors and architects breathed life into every piece of chiselled rock. I could not help but wonder while we snapped and whatsapped images, these pieces of art brimming with life from lifeless stones have stood the test of time, invasions, cultural transformations, juvenile graffiti and much more. History says that the civilization brought artisans from South East Asia and across the country of India together which is reflected in the styles adopted and blended in perfect harmony.





Marathas took over the Chola dynasty and developed a unique identity through Saurashtrainism which thrives till date. The thread of the linkage to other cultures is evident in a number of tourists of South East Asian origin and Maharashtra visiting these parts as a part of their ancestral linkage.

The highlight of the trip was the stopover at Thiruvaiyar - literally translated means confluence of 5 rivers. Half expecting the great saint Thiagaraja's Samadhi to be closed for darshan, we were pleasantly greeted by the serene almost empty temple on the banks of the river Cauvery. This is the place where the great saint went into Samadhi. The idol of Lord Rama, who he worshipped with a showering of krithis, is kept in an abode vibrating with his melodies. The annual festival that draws worshippers of music converges here in January. For now, the place had a small team of boys playing their

game of cricket outside a stone structure that has given the world a religion sans caste, creed -music. Looking at the idol of Rama, one could almost hear the great saint call out to him - "Nagumomu Ganale..."

The taste of Tanjore is incomplete without a mention about the cuisine. Full three course meals laden with traditional sweets, varieties of chutneys and pickles, the hallmark of a tanjorian, was served to perfection on plantain leaves.

Boarding the train that night, my son could now name temple silhouettes etched in the darkness of the night by their gopurams. He has his favourites now in Brihadeeshwara followed by Thiruvanaikkaval and Srirangam. As I completed the story of Raja Raja Chozhan 's dream run of conquests , his eyes visualized the kings of yester

years across the streets of Tanjore. Yes, there are always issues

of restoration, preservation and promotion of these magnificent structures. The people could be more enlightened and civic while visiting. Littering, etching their names on walls of historical significance, jostling, fighting, bribing – well we could behave better in the name of a civilized society. The administration could do with a bit more concern for preserving than merely earning. The hygiene – Oh yes! Less said the better. But what remains untarnished is the fact that history continues to silently shine through these dark spots calling out to us to relive the times. As the train pulled out of Tiruchirapalli junction the lines between mythology, fiction, history and time converged yet again.

To more such travels in India! Clink!



A JOURNEY TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

THOUGH BLEAK, GLOOMY AND RAW,
ICELAND HAS ITS OWN STARK BEAUTY FOR THE WRITER

Zoyab A Kadi (Z 101)

As the plane touches down at the Keflavik International Airport, the view through the window is dull, gloomy and disheartening. There are no trees, plants or greenery anywhere; no houses, no people, no signs of life; just a black, uninviting and godforsaken landscape — the kind that raises doubts whether coming to Iceland was a mistake after all. But, very soon the efficient airport staff dispels some of those doubts and make sure that the welcome, though not on a red-carpet, is sincere and genuine.

On the way to the capital city, Reykjavik, about 50 kms away, the dismal landscape continues,

with large patches of rumpled, bilious greenery. This is volcanic country and it is the black lava, solidified over centuries, that give visitors their first taste of what to expect. But here is a country that has vaulted itself to the top of the charts as one of the richest in the world — all within a period of 60 odd years. Having detached itself from Denmark in 1944, it has used its natural resources — fishing, sheep farming, energy and tourism — so judiciously that there is neither unemployment nor any poverty. Having a small, manageable population has obviously helped. But this meagre demography has a tragicomic side as well. Spread out thinly over the Island in natty little towns, villages and farms,

locally almost everybody is related to everybody else, which on the surface appears to be a great thing. But with weddings amongst blood relations — a sort of inbreeding — declared illegal, finding a marriage partner has become a major national pastime; with even the Government pitching in with a software mobile app to determine who is related to whom.

In spite of increasing affluence, better literacy and global exposure, Icelanders have endearingly retained some of their traditional beliefs and superstitions — as this little anecdote will suggest. Just outside Reykjavik is a monstrous aluminium factory with American collaboration. When plans were being drawn up, the local investors



developed cold feet and wanted the site to be examined for the presence of elves, fondly called the legendary 'Little Invisible People', whom they didn't want to displace. After many incredulous arguments and much cajoling a local consultant was employed who finally gave the green signal, (and probably laughed his way to the bank). Reykjavik, the capital, mercifully, is a small city. All its major sights — the Lutheran Church, the View Point, the Saga Museum, the lake & town hall, the main shopping streets, the University, the water front — can all be easily covered by foot in a single day. (In September, the sun sets around 8.15 PM).

But to soak in the city's atmosphere, an extra day is well worth the expense. Iceland is divided into eight administrative regions that have no names, but are numbered from two to nine. Its main highway, numbered one, runs right around the island, and cuts through all the eight regions, forming a loop of approximately 1,500 Kms. Most of the farms, resorts, villages and towns branch off from this highway. The numbering of the branch roads is so simple (and sensible) that even a newcomer like me didn't need the services of a GPS to locate a lonely farm in the middle of nowhere. If address given was 'Farm Steig,

end of Road 285', it meant the 85th road, off Highway 1, in Region 2 and you were there. Self-driven car for transport and lonely, isolated farms for night halts are the best ways to experience the many sights of Iceland. Packing enough eatables and drinks is essential, because what is available en route may either be too expensive or not to one's taste. Besides it saves a lot of valuable sight seeing time. With six more days to cover a loop of 1,500 kms, there was ample time to set my own pace and to interact with the locals, most of whom, thankfully, could converse in English. As for the local language, unless you have done your homework well, it's no use trying to pronounce or read any of the local sign boards.

To give a descriptive narration of the landscape is a task far beyond my limited capacity. All I can throw at the reader are little teasers and vignettes of the constantly changing, and variety of the landscape, with some photographs to add their weight and to make up for a handicap. It is not very well known that Europe's only desert is here, covering about a fifth of the island. The landscape, as you drive east, doesn't let you forget that. There is copious rain, snow and plenty of rivers and lakes; but the hard black lava rocks just refuse to yield to any form of useful or productive life. Driving solo through this hazy and murky landscape, with poor visibility, feeble mobile signals and with not a soul in sight, was an eerie experience. Further east are the majestic ice sheets that cover another fifth of the island. Inching down the mountains, like tired snakes, these glaciers are a grim and alarming reminder of the damage that humanity is inflicting upon the environment. Like the rest of the World, the Icelanders don't really know what to do or how to reverse the trend and are waiting for initiatives to come from elsewhere.



The fjords on the eastern seaboard — forming extremely beautiful silhouettes if you catch them in the early morning sunlight — are nowhere as intimidating or treacherous as those on the western side. But it was exhilarating driving through them. What wasn't fun though, was that the driving surface would change at irregular intervals from smooth tarred road to a pebbly gravelly track whose material attacked the car with such adhesive ferocity that it required three washes to get it all off. (Luckily self-help car washes are available free of charge at all fuel stops).



As the loop turns westwards at the little town of Egillastdir (the Eastern capital), and travels inland, the landscape changes drastically.

Ascending through a lightly forested area we are atop a plateau and into volcanic country. The clouds begin to darken in strange random patches, as if unable to decide where to pour their deluge. What initially looked like impending rain clouds, turned out to be volcanic gas emissions from long dormant craters, many of which are accessible after long strenuous climbs and through bone-chilling winds. I wouldn't have known about the emissions were it not for a Belgian student hitch hiker to whom I had given a lift. Akuriyeri (the northern capital) is the second largest city, with a laughable population of a mere 17,000; but sprawling luxuriously over an area very disproportionate to its demography. From here on, Highway One gently starts turning south, back towards Reykjavik. It is now the turn of bubbling spas, warm springs and shooting jets of steam. Some of them give the impression of factories buried underground

with just their chimneys sticking out as exhaust. There is a faint whiff of sulphur in the air. Up close, there is an overpowering feeling of dread as if the earth were breathing beneath your feet and exhaling angry and futile jets of water like a chained dragon. Like most European countries, Iceland has just learnt the trick of cashing in on some of its traditions, history and culture. Why not make money out of its folklores about elves and trolls! Why not claim that European history from the French Revolution onwards would have been completely different, if its volcanoes had not spewed ashes and dust across Europe! Sounds far-fetched but who wants to spoil their party! On the final stretch, Highway One dives into a tunnel under the Hvalfjorour Fjord for about seven kms and comes out almost within touching distance of the capital. The journey ends from where it began — from a car rental showroom. And as I try to recap the essence of my tour to Iceland, there is a realisation that this is no place for tomfoolery with nature. You come; contest with it at your own risk and capacity; admire it and leave.



THOUGHTS ON SANITATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Akshaya Ayyangar (P193)

The slogan of our government has been on investing in infrastructure since their inception in May 2014. Over the past few months, there has been increased focus on sanitation, waste management and proving basic services like water, roads, housing etc. through the active promotion of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Smart Cities Policy. Swachh Bharat, introduced by PM Modi on Gandhiji's birthday last year commenced with creating awareness on waste and sanitation management by promoting construction of toilets and the 'ice-bucket challenge' like drive to upload videos of people cleaning the streets on social media. Yet, there is much more to sanitation and waste management than merely creating awareness. Besides, the "SWACHH" concept already exists in Pune

(I touch upon this later on in the article). Where does the garbage thrown in millions of dustbins across the country finally end up? Who are involved in this process? What are the potential solutions to this predicament? These are some questions I try to elucidate (and hope they intrigue you as well) in this article.

Swachh Bharat is perhaps the most publicised infrastructure programme of the government for very good reasons. According to the 2011 Census, 67% of rural households defecate in the open and the UNICEF estimates that India accounts for 60% of the world's open defecation. Naturally the health implications of this is tremendous – it is estimated (by the Water and Sanitation Programme)

that the economic impact of inadequate water supply and sanitation was approximately 6.4% of GDP in 2006.

There are two components to Swachh Bharat – urban and rural – the former is applicable to all 'Statutory towns'¹ while the latter, Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G), is a revised version of the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA). There does not seem to be any drastic change between the NBA and its successor, apart from minor changes in the implementation strategy. In essence, both aim at achieving an 'open defecation free' India through massive awareness campaigns in the hope of inducing behavioural change in rural inhabitants so that they need to construct toilets. One striking limitation of this strategy is perhaps the insignificant value given to

develop deteriorating or often non-existent back end infrastructure (access to piped water, connection to the sewage network and so on) without which the mission cannot succeed. As a recent Supreme Court judgement pointed out, "without any fear of contradiction, a toilet in structure only is not a toilet in reality". The new Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin guidelines does not have any clause which mandates construction of toilets with water and sewer facilities before release of funds. In this context, SBM is no different from the erstwhile NBA or the Total Sanitation Campaign before it. Over 97m toilets have been built since 2001 using public funds and it remains to be seen how SBM results will differ from its predecessors.

We can only hope that implementing authorities regularly monitor and evaluate its performance in practice so that future governments will not make the same mistakes.

Moving to domestic waste management, it is important to note that our law differentiates different types of wastes (e-waste, battery, bio medical and plastic) by way of collection, transportation, treatment and disposal. This framework perhaps needs to be revisited as domestic waste typically contains all these wastes and yet is not treated separately. For e.g. old cds, bulbs, batteries, syringes, sanitary napkins, diapers and plastics in various forms, from food packaging to stationery are discarded in most houses. Domestic waste eventually ends up in "landfills" (these are more gigantic heaps of waste than landfills) on the outskirts of the city (Pallikarnai marsh and Kodangaiyur are the official ones in Chennai) contaminating the local environment, particularly the groundwater and air. The local government, in Chennai – the Corporation, usually in partnership with a private contractor are in charge of waste collecting, transporting, treating and disposing the waste

in a city. The waste is usually collected from street dustbins by big Corporation trucks and transported to a local transfer site where there is (sometimes) basic sorting of waste after which it is taken to a dumpsite.

In the midst of this process, the contribution of waste pickers in diverting waste from landfills is irreplaceable although they work in inhumane conditions and are not formally/legally recognised. This is where the SWACHH initiative in Pune comes in. SWACHH (Solid Waste Collection and Handling Cooperative) stands out as an innovative and distinctive Public Private Partnership for its work in improving management of solid waste and explicitly enhancing the lives of waste pickers and their families.

A key component in waste management is segregating the waste at source (this is cliché but sometimes clichés are good!) and keeping the segregation through till disposal. This is important because food waste – which is often wet – when mixed with plastics and other non-biodegradable waste, increases the cost (time/monetary) of treatment and disposal of the latter. Also, the monetary value of the both types of wastes is tremendous if handled separately. Food waste can be further sorted and made into compost and sold to farmers and horticulturalists. Non – biodegradable wastes can be sorted into many categories, the broadest categories being glass, paper, tins, plastic, electronics etc. Some kinds of non-biodegradable wastes are very difficult to dispose safely, for e.g. the filament of a tube light and low grades of plastics which have no monetary value for recycling. On another note, having said that recycling is a good thing, I think we ought to look more closely at its process before we come to a conclusion. For instance, in the case of plastic recycling, most recyclable plastics are melted and turned into pellets or products

with 'value'. But the melting is physically done by people without any safety equipment and are thus exposed to numerous toxic gases. All this to create value from plastic waste!

To conclude, waste management and sanitation are important issues which are complex and without a single solution. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan does not seem to be any different from older related government projects. What we need to do is to look at these issues from a life cycle perspective which traces out all the causes and effects of building a toilet (for example) and all that come with especially in this case – management of water resources. The approach to waste management also requires a life cycle approach and should be more decentralised and community managed rather than the current centralised system. Why? The characteristics of waste of each community/group of people is very different from the next group and in order to get the maximum possible value (monetary or not) out of the waste smaller quantities are easier to handle/manage. Also, integration of the waste picker in this process (as in the case of Pune) is relatively easier and beneficial to both – communities and the latter. So scaling up in this case is not a solution.

You may ask 'what can I do as an individual to address this issue?' Frankly, I think nothing! Think about it – in a country of 1.2 billion people, what impact can you (individually) make by composting your kitchen waste in Adyar, Chennai? Therefore, I come back to the role of the community. More people involved – greater the impact. On this note I do have an idea which the GNC committee may consider. We could probably start-off with some kind of waste management system for the club itself with source segregation, composting and so on and build this into a community project organised by GNC?

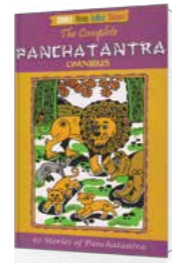
¹ Statutory towns are urban areas which are defined by administrative units like Municipal Corporation, town panchayats etc.



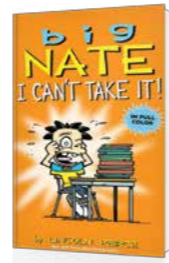
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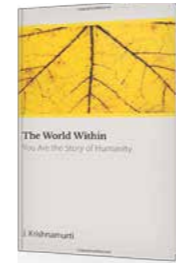
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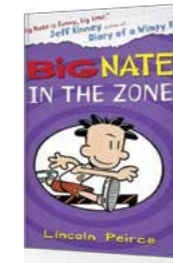
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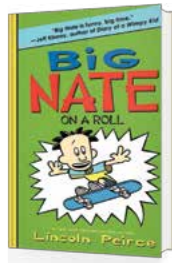
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The Story Of Humanity



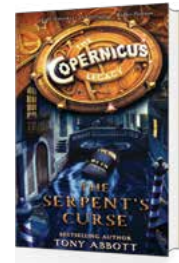
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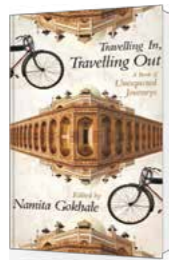
Bignate In The Zone



Bignate On
The Roll



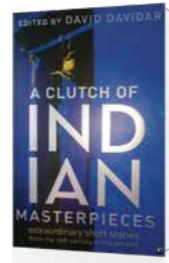
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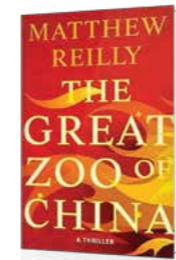
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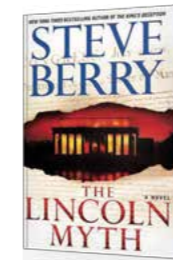
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A Clutch Of Indian
Master Pieces



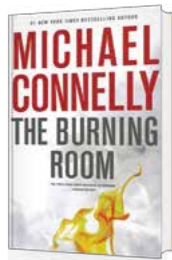
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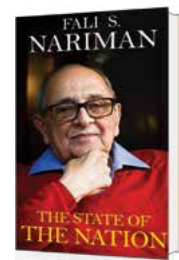
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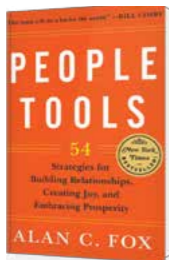
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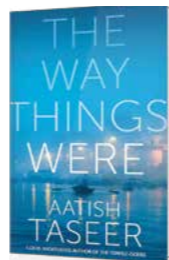
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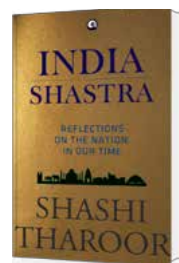
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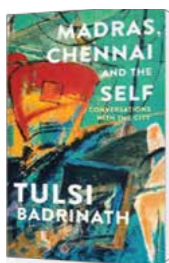
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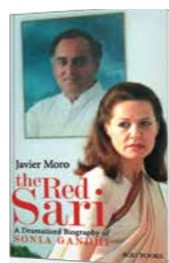
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COSMOPOLITAN CLUB	Taluk Office Road, Madikeri-571 201, Coorg District, KA.	08272-228529/220059, 9880388978
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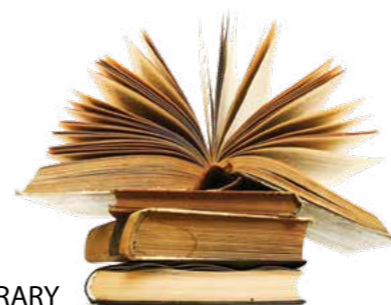
KITCHEN
12 noon – 3.00 pm
6.30.pm – 11.00 pm
Last order - 15 minutes before the closure time.



RESTAURANT
12 noon – 3.00 pm & 6.30.pm.
11.pm. (All Days)
Last order - 15 minutes before the closure time.



BAR
12 noon to 3.30 pm.
6.00.pm to 11.00.pm - Weekdays and Sundays
12 noon to 3.30.pm.
6.00.pm to 11.30.pm - Saturdays



LIBRARY
4.00 pm – 9.00 pm All Days
Cards 4.00 pm – 11.00 pm All Days



GYM
6.00 am – 11.00 am
3.00 pm – 9.00 pm
All Days
Monthly Subscription - Individual -350
Monthly Subscription - Family - 550



BILLIARDS
3.00 pm – 11.00 pm
All Days
Monthly Subscription - Individual - 450
Consolidated - 1500



SHUTTLE COURT
6.00 am – 10.00 am
3.00 pm – 9.00 pm
All Days
Monthly Subscription - 250
Guest Charges - 150



SQUASH
6.00 am – 9.00 am
3.00 pm – 9.00 pm
All Days
Monthly Subscription - 250
Guest Charges - 100



TENNIS
6.00 am – 10.00 am
3.00 pm – 6.30 pm
6.30 pm – 8.30 pm (Night tennis)
All Days
Monthly Subscription - 500
Coaching Kids - Monthly - 1500
Coaching Adults - Monthly - 2400



SWIMMING
6.00 am – 10.00 am
4.00 pm – 9.00 pm
6.00 am – 9.00 pm
Except Mondays
Monthly Subscription - Individual - 350
Monthly Subscription - Family - 550
Coaching - Monthly - 2500



OFFICE
10.am. – 6.30.pm.
Except Sundays

EVERY MOMENT IS PRECIOUS.
SAVE IT FOREVER.



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