

T. NAGAR

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## 'Power House bus stop is unsafe'



Power House bus stop in Kodambakkam on Arcot Road.

PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR.V

S. VAISHALI

The Power House bus stop in Kodambakkam on Arcot Road is unsafe. Here, the stop is in the middle of the road. To be precise, under pillar number four of Metro Rail which divides the road into two.

It should be noted this section of Arcot Road was made one-way more than a year ago. Both the bus stop and the one-way traffic are temporary arrangements aimed at facilitating the ongoing Metro Rail construction on Arcot Road.

But commuters find the temporary stop unsafe because MTC buses come on both sides of the one-way road. Some on the right

and others on the left. Commuters are unsure about the side of the road the next bus would arrive. Upon spotting the bus, commuters who wait in the middle of the road have to swiftly move to the side of the road where the bus arrives.

This is unsafe, inconvenient and causes unnecessary confusion. Commuters have missed buses due to this chaos.

Further, the road where the bus-stop is located is uneven and construction materials occupy the spot. There is no shelter. Metropolitan Transport Corporation is requested to attend to this issue.

Buses toward Broadway halt at this stop.

S. Vaishali is a resident of Kodambakkam

## Hyperlocal History, as written by residents

Three years shy of three decades: that is a long time. Over this period, *The Hindu Downtown* has been at its post, relaying residents' civic concerns to the powers that can address them. On this anniversary, besides renewing this commitment, the supplement refreshes the various initiatives it has launched. One of them is to spotlight climate change in a manner that is accessible to residents: what they can do in their corner of their world to combat it.

Besides, in the new year, *The Hindu Downtown* will be rolling out what it calls "Hyperlocal History". It is history as written by residents, not just residents of neighbourhoods with known heritage value, but also obscure ones whose stories are waiting to be told. In the first edition of 2026, the focus of this project, and how residents can contribute to it will be made known. So, be tuned in.



## 'Sewage contamination in CMWSSB water'

K. SUBRAMANIAN

The image shows sewage contamination in water supplied by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board at Ambal Nagar in Ramapuram on December 17, 2025. The problem is acute in Sengai Amman Kovil Street, Venu Street and Kakkam Street.



We face this issue almost every day. Residents have been raising this issue with CMSSB authorities since this April but to no avail.

These neighbourhoods fall in Ward 154 in Zone 11 - Valasarwakkam of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC).

K. Subramanian is the president of Ramapuram Makkal Nala Urimai Sangam (a residents welfare association in Ramapuram)

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## 'Stray dogs a cause for concern'

**ARUL PIRAKASAM .E**

Stray dogs attacked two adolescent girls at Bharani Colony in Saligramam on December 8. The injuries they sustained entailed hospitalisation. In another instance, a delivery staff refused to enter the colony and went back without delivering the goods. When we have guests we send vehicles to the entrance of the colony to bring them home safely.

Dogs chasing the public has become a common sight at Bharani Colony. There have been instances where people have fallen while trying to run to safety.

We notice the stray dogs in our neighbourhood have become aggressive in recent weeks. The reasons are unknown. Besides, the number of dogs have increased. Earlier, they were less than five but now there are around 20 dogs.

In the wake of many untoward incidents caused by stray dogs in recent times in various parts of the country, we find the growing number in our neighbourhood quite unsettling. Some of the residents in the colony continue to feed these dogs. As per a Supreme Court direction passed in August 2025, feeding of stray dogs in public spaces is prohibited. But this rule is not being enforced.

Though Greater Chennai Corporation responds to our complaints, the problem remains unsolved. While staff from GCC come to capture these dogs they run away and hide. We also learnt animal lovers in the colony guard these dogs from being captured.

Greater Chennai Corporation should attend to this issue at the earliest.

*Arul Pirakasam E, president,  
Bharani Colony Residents Welfare  
Association*

## 'No notice board to announce three-hour parking is free at GCC's parking facility'

Motorcyclists misusing footpaths is a common sight at the Pedestrian Plaza



The parking lot and the footpaths on Thyagaraya Road in T. Nagar.  
The images were taken on December 11, 2025.  
PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR. V

**S.N. RAJARAM**

No fee is charged for the first three hours of parking at the multi-level parking facility Thyagaraya Road (Pondy Bazaar) in T Nagar. Greater Chennai Corporation introduced this measure this October to improve patronage for the facility. This is a welcome initiative. But not many are aware of it. There is not even a noticeboard at the parking facility informing the public of this. So the facility continues to remain underutilised.

In fact, noticeboards should be kept in this regard at various spots in Pondy Bazaar. It should be noted footpaths at Pondy Bazaar were widened and developed as a pedestrian plaza under Smart Cities Mission a few years ago. But these footpaths are being misused to park vehicles. Also, motorcycles could be seen driving on the footpaths. Stringent measures should be taken against these violations.

While this parking facility remains underutilised, Greater Chennai Corporation has planned to construct another multi-level parking facility exclusively for two-wheeler within the premises of T Nagar MLA's Office on South Usman Road. GCC should ensure that the multi-level parking facility on Thyagaraya Road receives good patronage.

*S.N. Rajaram is a resident of  
Saligramam*

## 'SWD work in Vallalar Street moves at a tardy pace'

**T. SETHURAMAN**

Stormwater drain construction work is making slow progress at the 350-metre-long Vallalar Street at Padmanabha Nagar in Choolaimedu. Greater Chennai Corporation started the work this June and it has not been completed to this day.

On account of this work, the road has been dug-up at three locations and the public has been enduring the inconvenience for six months now. Following the recent rains, water remains stagnant in the incomplete drain and has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes paving way for vector-borne diseases. It may also be noted, ever since GCC started the construction, sewage was leaking into the under-construction drain. Residents

raised this issue to the GCC officials. But without addressing this flaw, GCC continued with the construction. Now, sewage is also stagnant in the drain.

Greater Chennai Corporation officials cite north-east monsoon for suspending the work. I do not buy into this explanation because the work could have got completed in three months since the commencement of the work because the road is less than half-a-kilometre. But the work has been dragging its feet.

This neighbourhood falls under Ward 106 in Zone 8 - Anna Nagar.

Complaints to the Zone 8 officials and to the Regional Deputy Commissioner - Central were to no avail.

*T. Sethuraman is a resident of Choolaimedu*



Vallalar Street at Padmanabha Nagar in Choolaimedu on December 19, 2025. PHOTO: UMESH KUMAR. V

## FESTIVITY



An Anglo Indian ball at a star hotel in the city; and (below) an Anglo Indian family in Royapuram in the 70s. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

On December 25, the famous Anglo Indian Christmas Ball will get rolling once again, at Faiz Mahal in Egmore

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Over the decades, the Anglo-Indian Christmas Ball in Chennai has stepped into many venues, from Railway enclaves to private halls. It has left an indelible mark on some of these venues, Faiz Mahal and Shiraz Hall, both in Egmore, counted among them. On December 25, Faiz Mahal is going to play host to yet another Christmas Ball, organised by Anglo-Indians but by no means restricted to them.

For a good part of the twentieth century, the epicentre of Anglo-Indian social life was the Railway Institutes, and in Chennai, it was the one in Perambur.

"Earlier, the majority of Anglo-Indians worked in the Indian Railways," says Harry MacLure, publisher and editor of *Anglos in the Wind*. "So all our balls and dances naturally happened there."

These institutes were cultural commons. Christmas dances, Easter balls, May Queen celebrations and Valentine's Day Balls would unfold there year after year. Entry was not restricted to railway employees. "Anglo-Indians from outside the railways were always welcome," Harry recalls. "That

# The Ball is back



camaraderie was a defining feature."

The dances themselves were formal, unhurried affairs. Live bands played through the night. Waltzes, foxtrots and jives held the floor. Even those who did not dance stayed on, content to listen. Christmas balls often began at nine at night and ended at five in the morning – a full night given over to music, movement and social ritual.

By the 1970s and 80s, Anglo-Indians were beginning to look for fortunes beyond the Indian railways, migrating abroad or entering new professions. "We lost our hold over the Railway Institutes," Harry says. "Once that happened, we had to look for other venues."

That search led to a succession

of spaces across Chennai – Binny's among them – before settling, over the last two decades, on private halls. In Egmore, Shiraz Hall and Faiz Mahal emerged as consistent hosts of what is now known as the Grand Christmas Ball. "Shiraz has been happening for at least 20 years," Harry notes.

"There has always been a strong relationship between the Anglo-Indian community and the Muslim families who own these halls." Even as costs rose, negotiation rarely entered the picture. Christmas, after all, is not the season for bargaining.

Not just the economics of celebration, its composition has also changed. Live bands, once essential, now share space with DJs and

singers performing with backing tracks. "Earlier, if you said there would only be a DJ, the show would flop," Harry recalls. "People would not come."

For many, these halls are not interchangeable spaces but repositories of personal history. Treasure Jacob, a member of the Forum of Anglo-Indian Women (FAIW), remembers her first dance clearly and not because of the venue. "I did not meet my husband at the dance," she says. "He was already my boyfriend. But the first time we went together, he taught me how to dance. It was 1988. "I did not know how to dance at all," she recalls. "He told me, 'Do not worry, I will teach you.'" Songs such as Save the Last Dance, Mari Mari and Could I Have This Dance still return her to that floor.

Getting there, however, required negotiation. "As children, we went with our parents," Treasure says. "But once we grew up, getting permission was a struggle." Dances ran through the night, and parents enforced strict curfews. "My dad would come at four in the morning, show his watch and say, 'Time is up.' We would beg for one last dance."

The protocol was firm. Tickets were checked. Dress codes enforced. Suits and gowns were mandatory. Fathers sometimes waited outside, unable to enter without

formal wear, standing guard until it was time to go home. Fashion, like everything else, has evolved from low-waist dresses and leg-of-mutton sleeves to long gowns and contemporary silhouettes but the sense of occasion remains intact.

Even the food tells a story. Earlier menus featured pork fry, meat roast, cutlets, chapathis, sandwiches, tongue and oxtail. Chicken was rare. Today's spreads include everything from pasta and noodles to Manchurian – a buffet shaped by migration and return.

That return remains a powerful pull. Many Anglo-Indians travel back from Australia, particularly Perth every Christmas. Others come once every two years. "We all want to come back," Harry admits. "Even if we can't resettle, the connection never goes away."

So does the venue matter? "Each place has its own mood," Harry says. "But the identity comes from the people."

While the grand Christmas balls now gravitate towards Shiraz Hall and Faiz Mahal in Egmore, the season is not confined to these marquee addresses. Smaller associations continue to hold dances in neighbourhood halls across Pallavaram, Tambaram and St Thomas Mount – areas that once had a striking Anglo-Indian presence. These gatherings are more compact, often organised by local clubs or family networks, but they carry the same codes of dress, music and memory. For many older residents, these halls are closer to home and closer to heart.

**Chennai-based non-profit Road Guru Trust is close to completing the distribution of 15,000 helmets provided by an insurance company to students and their parents in the city**

LIFFY THOMAS

**R**ecently, 48 students of Kesari Higher Secondary School in T. Nagar and their parents received free helmets. When this initiative kickstarted at the beginning of the academic year, 15,000 helmets had to be given away. The stock has dwindled hugely, which is commendable; every helmet cleared off the shelf is a safety measure in place for an individual.

Road Guru Trust, a non-profit committed to improving road safety in Chennai is distributing these helmets provided by ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company as part of its corporate social responsibility.

K.P. Sendil Kumar, who runs Road Guru Trust, explains: "In June, I attended this national summit 'Dialogue to Action: VRU's and Road Safety' organised by NGO TRAX S. Society and Central Road Research Institute in New Delhi. Under the CSR programme 'Ride to Safety', the company has been giving away helmets for the last seven years, focusing on one metropolitan city every year. Chennai was their focus for 2025 and I happened to be the only person from the state at the summit, so I volunteered to drive the distribution." Sendil, 58 years old IT professional who retired from a multinational company.

The campaign resonated with Sendil for many reasons including the fact that his Trust promoted road safety through education and awareness programmes.

The highlight of this initiative is the equal focus on distributing junior helmets. It therefore serves as a silent but effective advocacy for children's helmets, largely ignored because many parents are unaware of their availability.

"Most children dropped at schools by their parents in a two-wheeler do not wear a helmet. In fact, many do not buy one for their children. So this campaign was unique as it targeted both parents and children, each nudging the other to wear an ISI helmet while driving," says Sendil.

The Trust received close to 15,000 helmets for distribution. Since June, Sendil has been reaching out to government and less-privileged institutions asking school heads to identify students who would need them the most.

This turned out to be the most challenging task for the Trust. "We reached out to 170 schools in Chen-



### Volunteer for road safety

K.P. Sendil Kumar's longstanding desire was to wear the police uniform and he fulfilled that by becoming a member of Tamil Nadu Police Traffic Warden Organisation in 2011. "Various statistics on road accidents was the trigger for me to do something more on road safety," says Sendil Kumar.

In 2015, Road Guru Trust was registered and works on a lean team mainly volunteers from Rotaract clubs. "We conduct awareness campaigns at schools, colleges and apartment complexes," says Sendil, adding that they invite volunteers to join them in efforts to make city roads safe.



## A head start in road safety



nai and only 65 got back to us with a list of names," says Sendil.

The next task for the Trust was conducting a session at the schools for students and parents about road safety and the importance of wearing a proper headgear, before giving them a helmet.

"My sessions are made interactive and engaging with stories and live examples," he says.

The Trust has 15 more schools to cover. The number of helmets distributed in a school ranges between 48 and 540, and they are only given to students from classes IV to VIII, given the size of the junior helmets.

Sendil is grateful to a few school heads who helped spread the word. The headmaster of Chennai Public School in Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar contacted other GCC schools. Likewise, Natasabapathy, principal of Anjugam Higher Secondary School in West Mambalam collected details of 15 educational institutions and got a list ready. T. Nagar traffic SI Manjunath and traffic warden Mala have also been great support.



(Clockwise from top) The canteen at Vani Mahal in T. Nagar; C.R. Balaji outside Mylapore Fine Arts Club and the glitch in the GCC nameboard. PHOTOS: RAGU R AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



C.R. BALAJI

**W**hen I first jabbed it out, this report came out in a chronological order. The account beginning at the beginning of the day. In the revision, the chronology got jumbled, the features of the day that stood out – in some cases, stuck out like a sore thumb – muscling their way to the front lines.

So, my narration of how December 18 went visiting sabhas starts *in medias res*, the clock hovering over the interstitial space between late afternoon and early evening. And I had set out on a sabha-hopping schedule in the morning. If you are a soul currently domiciled in Chennai and sensitive to civic issues, which I think I am, you cannot miss how Metro Rail work has re-routed your life. And if one is given to kvetching about something or the other, the topic of how Metro Rail is redirecting your steps is just for you.

While heading to Ethiraj Kalyana Nilayam in Alwarpet where Indian Fine Arts Society is conducting Marghazi concerts, I realised how Metro Rail work around Alwarpet makes sure you are never on time for anything unless you have given yourself enough buffer time for at least a couple of detours on wheels, and in some cases, some traipsing for good measure. On account of traffic diversions, I had to park my vehicle at C.P. Ramaswamy Road and walk towards Ethiraj Kalyana Nilayam. The trek to the venue had left a bad taste in my mouth, and a sumptuous meal from the caterer Mountbatten Mani would have reversed it. But my tank had already been filled to capacity, and a meal at this sabha canteen is reserved for another

# A rasika's day out

As he heads to various sabhas in one day, this Mandaveli resident finds himself switching between many notes, including a note of bitterness for the traffic diversions on some roads

day. The ambience at this concert venue is commendable.

Earlier in the day, when I had visited Narada Gana Sabha, which also boasts a good ambience, I was extremely thankful that it offered sufficient parking inside the campus.

On the topic of expansive spaces, how can one miss The Music Academy? It is expansive enough not only for the rasikas to move about but also the wheels that brought them there. There is an aura about this venue that is comparable to the Lord's cricket ground. If you are an international cricketer, and you have not walked out to the middle at Lord's, you are woefully short of having had a complete international cricketing experience. The Music Academy can be used analogously while describing a complete music experience during Marghazhi. A word of praise for the organisers for allowing people who visit the venue only for the canteen food, catered by Shastha.

At Thyaga Bramma Gana Sabha

in Vani Mahal, T. Nagar, parking for two-wheeler was a sore point: I had to squeeze my two wheels through the narrow side entrance. Parking should be a huge challenge in the evening hours, and through the day during weekends. Krishna Gana Sabha at Maharajapuram Santhanam Salai in T. Nagar stands out for a building that seems to have been cut out of picture from the British era, and also for the trees that provide shade. The seats in the hall were filled, so were the ones in the canteen, where catering is being done by Sattva Catering. My civ-



ic consciousness coming to the fore, I could not help notice a glitch in the Greater Chennai Corporation name board at this road: 'M' in Santhanam is missing.

At the end of the day, I wished I had carried a spare tummy along with me. My small tummy was filled to capacity in the morning after breakfast spread across two sabha canteens, and refilled in the



afternoon at another sabha. So, at most sabha canteens, I was just a curious bystander. My commentary about sabha canteens in this report is therefore restricted.

The Mylapore Fine Arts Club on Musiri Subramaniam Road is the sabha closest to my patch and by 7.30 a.m., I settled down at the sabha canteen to be served by ABC Catering. The footsteps on the road were thin, largely those of morning walkers. A few of them had settled down beside me. I go in for Pongal and Vadai. Pongal was lip-smacking good. I wished the Vadai was bigger and not of medium size that it was, and also wished the bill was on the lower side. But the gastronomic fare meets expectations; I gulped down coffee without sugar and left.

The next stop was Sri Parthasarathi Swami Sabha at Vidyabharthi Kalyana Mandapam. The sabha has on board Arusuvai Arasu Caterers. My tastebuds craving an experience from the past, I ordered a plate of idlis. With the exquisite softness of the idlis from this caterer etched in my memory, I could not but notice that this quality was not as pronounced as before. I gave my honest feedback to the one in charge of the counter; and I

swept my eyes at the other tables, and how the gourmands were lapping it all up, I sensed all other items were fine.

Lunch happened at Thyaga Bramma Gana Sabha in Vani Mahal where Sattva Catering Service is on board. Lunch came in impressive quantities and damage to the wallet was low, just ₹ 400. Tastebuds were pampered. Features included Elai Sappadu without onion and garlic.

# Another rarity at Broken Bridge

Rare seabird shows up on Chennai coast. A Bangalore resident documents it



Red-billed tropicbird photographed by Anu Parthasarathy at Broken Bridge in Adyar Estuary on December 14; and (below) Anu with a few members of the birding community she is part of.

## PRINCE FREDERICK

**B**irders could put in an absurd number of hours at a habitat, one next to their own "burrow". Every dawn, they could be sleepwalking to the patch, trussed up in camouflage rags, bent under the weight of expectations and gear, shutter sack on the shoulders and binoculars around the neck. And yet, that one rarity could defiantly stay out of their radar. Counter to this, someone strolls in from another city, strays on to the patch, as all other options for the day got crossed out. And lo and behold, there it is! The bird directs a red-billed smile at them.

Anu Parthasarathy probably would have preferred sighting a Red-billed tropicbird after waiting for it for years, to the way she actually sighted it – just like that. A Banglorean who manages once-a-month visits to Chennai to bond with close relatives, she decided to bird around the Broken Bridge area of the Adyar Estuary on December 14, as all other plans for the day had peeled off like paint flakes. How one big plan fell, in her own words – "I ended up at the Broken Bridge because I could not get online tickets to the renovated Tholkappia

Poonga."

A birder through-and-through, Anu's mind instantly associates leisure with bird walks. Social visits to Chennai are always a package tour with time for extemporaneous birding trips thrown into it. But prior to this visit, she had ambled down what is unofficially called the Broken Bridge Road only a couple of times. Her parents living in Velachery, a peek at the Pallikaranai marsh and Sholinganallur marshland is more common.

"This Sunday was pure joy and thrill – I was almost wrapping up around 8 a.m. after birding from 6:30 a.m. photographing the egrets and storks. I met Bharath there. He along with Sagarika excitedly pointed me to what initially looked like Caspian terns to me, till I noticed the long tails. They told me they were sure they were tropicbirds and asked me to click and document," Anu recalls. Those two birders are Bharath Ravikumar and Sagarika Gupta, names recognisable to those swinging by the Chennai section of eBird.

"The tropicbirds were a sight – beautiful with long streamer tails. They came around a few times closer and were circling. I did not see them land anywhere. There were four birds – all of them as far as I could tell were Red-billed trop-



icbirds. After about 10 to 15 minutes I did not sight them again and I had to leave by 8:30 a.m. There were some other birders too that might have sighted these birds again," Anu recounts. She has posted the record of the sighting with photos on eBird. Sagarika Gupta has also posted the sighting on the platform. Rummaging through eBird records, this could be the first documented sighting of red-billed tropicbirds in Chennai.

Anu used to live in Chennai in the 1990s. In Bangalore where she has been living for 15 years following her return to India from the United States, she is domiciled in a community called Eagle Ridge, near Bannerghatta. She is something of a change maker in her neck of the woods.

"It is a small green and wooded community. I work on trying my best to conserve the trees and habitats we have, but it has not been easy with the new residents cutting out a lot of the trees and undergrowth. It has been documenting birds in the community for almost 10 years now. I created a small safe garden area for migratory and residents birds to access water by placing a bunch of water bowls. I have been maintaining this for many years now and many bird enthusiasts visit to sight the birds as well. A few other residents also have been doing this and helping sustain the bird life. We have a small group of birders here now. We have recorded over 125 species in the community over the years."

So, Anu is not Fortune's favourite child, as one assumed at first, seeing her being gifted a rare sighting on a golden platter. She worked for it, showing up for trees, birds and Nature in her "gated habitat" back in Bangalore, and the award ceremony for this perseverance took place at the Broken Bridge in Chennai on December 14.

## Another sighting on December 20

On December 20, when this edition was going to print, another sighting of a Red-billed tropicbird close to the Broken Bridge area of the Adyar Estuary was reported. Sundaravel Palanivel spotted the bird in the skies just as he had hit the path to the Broken Bridge area. The bird was hovering over the fishing hamlet, says Sundaravel. He was going to bird at Adyar Estuary with a bunch of the other birders, who had arrived at the spot before he did. "I was ten minutes late, and so, was behind them." And that made all the difference. Punctuality is overrated, going by Sundaravel's experience.

## Pothys opens a new showroom



Pothys and Pothys Swarna Mahal opened an 'integrated' showroom on December 14 in Padi. Spread across 5,00,000 square feet, the showroom is designed as a one-stop destination offering textiles, jewellery, home essentials, lifestyle products and groceries.

The seven-floor showroom has dedicated each floor to a category such as ground floor for jewellery

and sixth floor for groceries, vegetables and fruits.

As part of the opening offer, a 10 percent discount is given on textile products till December 21.

At the Swarna Mahal, ₹ 2,000 discount can be availed per sovereign on gold jewellery and a ₹10,000 per carat discount on diamond jewellery till December 31, said a release.

## Hospital celebrates founder's day with blood donation drive



As part of the founders' day celebration, Be Well Hospitals organised a series of events to support those in need. Dr. C.J. Vetrievi is the founder of the hospital.

The hospitals organised a blood donation camp with Chennai Blood Centre, where the public and hospitals employees donated blood.

This was followed by free lunch for the residents of Charu Old Age Home and distribution of household essentials, including dhotis to underprivileged families in T. Nagar, said a release issued by the hospitals.

## Margazhi Yuvautsav

The season 2 of Jyothi Indira Margazhi Yuvautsav will run until January 04.

Held at Jyothi Indira Thirumana Mandapam in Valasaravakkam, the festival will include dance and vocal recital programs.

Lalithaa Jewellery Mart Limited is presenting the event.

On December 21, Rithanjali School of Dance will present a dance programme at 5.30 p.m., 23, Jayashree Shriram and Shaheed Shriram will perform a vocal con-

cert, accompanied by S Vydyanathan on violin and Abinav Ganesan on mridangam, 28, a dance duet programme by M S Harshitha and Pradeepa Lakshmi K at 5.30 p.m., 29, a vocal concert by Shree Bala S R, accompanied by Sivaraman Suresh on violin, and B. Sundar on mridangam at 5.30 p.m., January 01, a dance programme by Nirthya Anubhava at 5.30 p.m., and 03, a vocal concert by New Delhi sisters accompanied by Medha on violin and Sathyawageeswaran on Mridangam.

For details, contact 95513 42155.

## Tamil theatre festival from December 25

Bhavan's Margazhi Mahotsav is conducting a nine-day Tamil Theatre Festival at the TAG Auditorium, Kilpauk. Entry to all performances is free. Athithi, Ardhanaari, Kaanal Neero, Payanam and Kapidhwaja, all by Drummies Drama, will be staged on December 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 respectively. Other plays that will be staged from December 30 to January 2 are Surukku Pai, Leela Vinodham, Kalavu Neekiya Padalam and LKG Aasai.

All plays begin at 7 p.m.

## Stories from Panchatantra come alive

Bala Mandir Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children celebrated its annual day recently

Bala Mandir Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children celebrated its Annual Day 2025 on December 12 at the Bengal Association auditorium in T. Nagar.

Based on the theme "Neidiyin Vazhiyil - (Moral Path) - Stories from Panchatantra, children from the Centre presented skits based on these stories.

The children, accompanied by their mothers, performed songs, skits and dances highlighting various stories from Panchatantra. Eight stories from the Panchatantra were adapted to suit the special children's abilities and showcased at the annual day function including The Fox and the Crow, The cap seller and the monkeys, The Fox



and the Grapes and The two cats and the monkey.

The chief guest was Dr. Rema Chandramohan, Deputy Executive Officer, and retired Head of the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children, Egmore.

Bala Mandir Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children is engaged in providing early intervention services for children with intellectual disability and associated conditions in the age

group 0-6 years, and a skill development programme "Jivikam" for children above eight years.

The training given is with an indigenously developed programme "Upanayan" meaning to 'lead along', which helps in assessment and gives individualised training to the child, said a release. This is totally parent-involved and is an integrated approach of Special Education, Therapy along with Yoga, Music and Physical Education.

## Best Bargains

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## Three-day training session on baking



Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME -Tamil Nadu, is conducting a workshop on baking from December 29 to 31 at its premises at SIDCO Industrial Estate, Guindy. Time: From: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, the workshop will focus on preparation of bakery products such as cookies, biscuits, and cakes made from millets and wheat. Participants will also learn about government subsidies and loans.

Those above 18 years of age with a minimum educational qualification of class eight can apply. Hostel facility is also available. Registration fee is ₹5500. For details, call 8668102600 / 9943685468.

## Mushroom cultivation



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on mushroom cultivation of December 26 at its premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required to take part in the programme. For details, call 044 - 29530048

## Book donation

N.S. Venkataraman, a resident of Besant Nagar, has got 90 books for donation. According to a press release, the genre includes history, religion, economics, and politics. Individuals and institutions are welcome. Those interested, may call 044 - 47662241 / 044 - 43540719.

N.S. Venkataraman is the trustee of Nandini Voice for The Deprived

## An opportunity to be a zoo ambassador

School students attending Vandalur Zoo's winter camp will receive this title and also a one-year passport that offers 10 free visits and access to newsletters

Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur is hosting a winter camp in three batches for school students.

'Vandalur Zoo's Ambassador Winter Camp - 2025', as it is called, is open for enrolment by students from Standard V and above.

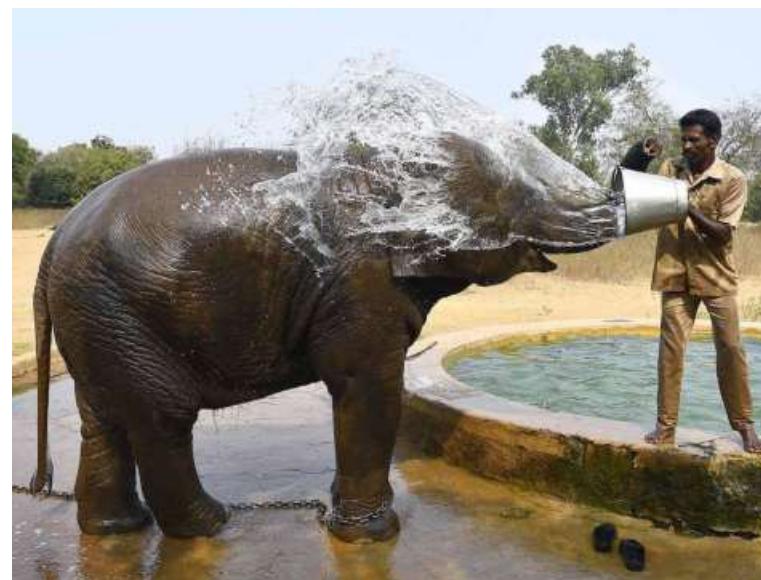
The two-day camp will be held on December 24-25, 26-27, and 28-29.

The camp will run from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on each of these days, and the fee is ₹900.

Parents should arrange for their children's transportation from home to the zoo and back home. They should send their children with a water bottle, snacks and fresh-cut fruits, says a press release.

The participants will receive a course kit that includes a student bag, writing pad, pen, activity sheets and an e-book on 'Animals in Vandalur Zoo'.

The benefits of the camp include being titled 'Zoo Ambassador' with a



badge and certificate, a zoo passport with a validity period of one year that entitles them to 10 free visits

and access to newsletters.

For details, log in to <https://aazp.in/wintercamp2025/>

## MTC to issue tokens from December 21

Metropolitan Transport Corporation will start issuing tokens from December 21 for senior citizens for travel on its fleet of buses. The half-yearly tokens will be valid for the January-June period (till June 30). Elderly citizens can travel on the bus 10 times a month and they receive around 60 tokens for the period. The tokens will be issued from 8 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. until January 31 at more than 40 bus depots, halting points and terminuses across the city. In addition to renewing, beneficiaries can also apply for new identity cards and

first-time applicants can get new cards. The tokens will be issued at T. Nagar, Saidapet, Central Railway Station, Broadway, Guindy Estate, Iyappathangal, Vadapalani, K. K. Nagar, Adambakkam, Velachery, Anna Nagar, Koyambedu, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Ambattur Old Terminus, Avadi, Ayanavaram, Integral Coach Factory, Tondiarpet -1, Toll Gate, Ennore, Vyasarpadi, MKB Nagar, Madhavaram, Padiyanallur, Red Hills, Perambur railway station, Vallalar Nagar,

## Carol competition held



An intercollegiate carol competition marked three-day Christmas carnival at Annai Veilankanni's College of Arts & Science. On the occasion, Nativity play was performed. According to a press release, 15 colleges took part. Donation of food, clothes and other essentials to orphanages and old-age homes was also part of the celebration.

## Recognition

Railway Pensioners' Samaj honoured 82-year-old N.Subramanian recently. According to a press release, he was honoured with a memento and a shawl. Subramanian is seen as a voice of advocacy for the rights of railway pensioners.



## Maths talent exam on February 8

Tamil Nadu Science & Technology Centre is conducting a talent examination in mathematics on February 8, 2026 at Periyar Science & Technology Centre. Time: At 11 a.m. It is a 90-minute test.

Students from class five to eight can take part. The nature of the test is pattern recognition in numbers, says a press release.

Those interested, need to register on or before January 27, 2026. For details, call 044 - 2441 0025.

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