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## This team hits the roads of Chennai looking for used cooking oil



RAJALAKSHMI V.

**A**midst the bustling traffic, an electric vehicle is doing the rounds stopping at restaurants, cloud kitchens and hotels to collect cooking oil that cannot be used anymore – in fact, dangerous to human health if it were pressed into cooking duty any longer.

Founded by Vasanth J.B., Venka-

tshwaran S., and Srindhi B. in 2020, Uranus Oil Company is partnering with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in this work; and is collaborating with bio-diesel plants, only those registered under FSSAI.

It has a giant footprint in Chennai, having born as a startup in this metro, and according to Vasanth, also has a foot gently planted in a few states across India, carrying

out operations there with the help of channel partners.

“We are a young company driven by the goal of promoting sustainability and a circular economy across the country,” says Vasanth. “We focus on used cooking oil (UCO) because it is not only widely available but also a hazardous waste when reused and consumed by humans. We collect UCO from star hotels, restaurant chains, go-



vernment canteens, universities, and many food businesses and aggregate it. We have an ambitious target in mind, but we are working hard to reach it. We aim to hit 40 tons per day soon,” he adds.

### The process

First, customers reach out to Uranus Oil Comopany; and they are assigned a dedicated team. Next, representatives contact the customer to assess if they have a steady supply of used oil. If they do, they are entered into the company’s database and partnership program and provided with a safe used cooking oil kit and storage container.

After the oil is collected hygienically at the customer’s location, payment is made. The UCO is then stored in clean, well-ventilated tanks before being sent to part-

nored biodiesel manufacturers who convert it into biodiesel.

This business also fosters entrepreneurship among youth.

“We identify regions to promote entrepreneurship among young people. Many aspiring entrepreneurs want to create a sustainable livelihood, and we offer them the opportunity to collect UCOs. This not only provides them with a revenue stream but also builds a positive ecosystem. They collect and supply UCOs to us, while we handle compliance and transfer the oil to biodiesel manufacturers. Currently, we have over 150 young entrepreneurs running localised drives and collaborating with us,” Vasanth explains.

“For our operations, we exclusively use electric vehicles to minimize fossil fuel usage, further aligning with our commitment to sustainability,” adds Vasanth.

They are accredited by FSSAI, FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), and have applied for ISCC (International Sustainability and Carbon Certification). Their team consists of a mix of young tech enthusiasts and experienced professionals.

Uranus Oil’s collection process focuses on gated communities and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to ensure efficiency. “We have established partnerships with apartments and RWAs where a designated member oversees the collection process,” explains Vasanth. The electric vehicle does not head to individual houses for collecting used cooking oil.

For UCO collection, call +91 733894419 or email ruco@uranusoil.com.

## READERS WRITE

### A Republic Day message from Mandaveli Raja Street

RWA joins hands with Kabadiwala Connect to drive recyclable waste collection

GANGA SRIDHAR

**M**andaveli Raja Street RWA has joined Kabadiwala Connect’s “Invisible Recyclers” initiative on the eve of India’s 76th Republic Day.

This is a small gesture towards creating a cleaner nation where every individual’s consciousness is sensitive to the need for waste segregation as also the importance of sending all possible recyclable waste to effective recycling. The first recyclable waste collection drive was organised on January 25 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Raja Street.

Under the initiative, a local re-



cycler comes to the doorstep every fortnight. Recyclable waste such as plastic bottles, milk packets, glass bottles, newspapers, metal waste and e-waste was collected at the Dwaraka collection point and at their respective doorsteps on request. The recyclable waste

was weighed and residents were incentivised in cash and redeemable points that got added to the Kabadiwala Connect app installed on their mobile. These points can be redeemed at local stores such as Ajnabi Mithai and other partner stores.

A good number of residents of Raja Street strode out with their recyclable waste and happily gave it away for recycling and also got incentivised. The RWA sent out video messages spreading awareness about the drive. The RWA has also been motivating household

workers to join this initiative by starting segregation at their respective workplace and collect the recyclable waste and deposit it during the next drive and get remunerated.

At the end of the three-hour waste collection drive a good 125 kg of recyclable waste was collected from the Raja Street houses and sent for recycling.

Typically, densely populated streets such as Raja Street have a mixed crowd of residents ranging from those living in small and large apartments to those in independent houses, hostels and portion houses. Spreading the message to segregate and motivating residents and sustaining the segregation practices have been a long-time challenge for the RWA. In the light of such initiatives, the association sees a reason for hope.

(Ganga Sridhar is a resident of Mandaveli Raja Street)

## Iconic park heading towards a makeover

Consultative meeting called by MLA recently saw a mixed response from walkers and residents

**RAJALAKSHMI V.**

**A** proposal to revamp Nageshwara Rao Park in Mylapore with a slew of amenities including food kiosks has not received much favour from walkers and residents. On January 20, close to 20 people attended a meeting called by Mylapore MLA Dha. Velu to discuss plans for renovation of the park.

Currently, the park is in a poor condition due to ongoing work by Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board and other construction works within its premises.

The proposed plan, estimated at ₹8 crores, aims to transform the park with several new amenities, including an entrance plaza, interactive spaces, a herbal



garden, a kids' play area, a fountain with tree-side seating areas, gazebos, tensile seating, food kiosks, ribbon seating, an open-air theatre with landscaping, a waterbody, lush green landscapes, and a security cabin. Existing amenities will also be restored as part of the project.

Many visitors feel the plan is unappealing and have urged Greater Chennai Corporation to focus



During the meeting held at the park; and the design.

**PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

"The park has already lost much of its beauty," he remarked, calling for better maintenance over drastic changes.

Another regular visitor highlighted specific needs: "The park should have a concrete boundary wall on all four sides and at least four restrooms for men and women. Food vending must be restricted to areas outside the park. Stone seating should be added and small fountains are fine, but there should be no television or music. Proper lighting, smooth walking paths, and mosquito control are crucial. Supervisors must be present during park hours, entry points can be limited to two. Most importantly, entry should remain free, and standby power backup is essential during night."

While the new plan aims to revitalise Nageshwara Rao Park, residents highlight the need for a balanced approach that prioritises maintenance and preservation of the park's natural charm.

### A look at Ripon Building's 'dress sense'



Ripon Building changes its colours according to the dictates of a software, Dynamic Architecture Lighting. The variations in lighting follow a monthly sequence that sits like a humongous rock. But this "rock" is gently pushed aside and the sequence broken from time to time. That is when a special day, a day of special observance comes knocking on the door. A specific colour that is aligned with that day would come on. The programming would be suitably altered to accommodate the new display, says a Greater Chennai Corporation official familiar with the system that operates the coloured special lighting of the structure. He adds that for example, for Glaucoma Day, it would be all blue. Orange for Bone Day; pink for Women's Day. On Independence Day, the colours in the tri colour would come on. The GCC official notes three colours have been kept out of the system -- brown, dark violet and black. On Sundays alone, there would be a pageantry of all the available colours. They will arrive in a procession, each striding in separately, and then at intervals, there would be a mix of colours. The image was taken on January 22, 2025. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

## Holy Angels alumni association celebrates silver jubilee

**A**s in previous years, the reunion meet of old students of Holy Angels Anglo Indian Higher Secondary School in T.Nagar will be held on January 26 from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. But this year's meet is extra special because the Holy Angels' Anglo Indian Higher Secondary School Alumni Association steps into its silver jubilee year.

Formed in December 1999 by late Sarojini Shanmugasundaran, Kamala Devi Parthasarathy of 1969 batch, and J. Revathi and Lakshmi Venkatraman of 1967 batch, they together drafted the blue print for the alumni association. The association was formally launched in December 1999 in the presence of Sr. Kamala, then principal and many retired teachers. The first meeting was held in January 2000, with Justice Ranganathan as chief guest.

What started with 150 alumni members has now a strength of more than 2,500, says a note shared by the Alumni Association.

Many distinguished people are part of the association including Indra Nooyi, Chandrika Tandon and Prithika Chary. In the field of arts, the

### Reunion today

The reunion meet of Thiruvi-Ka Higher Secondary School (Chennai) Alumni begins at 9.30 a.m. on January 26 followed by networking and lunch. K. Jagannathan, an alumnus of 1972-73 batch and former engineering director and chief engineer, Metro Water, is the chief guest.

Old students from the 1975 batch, who are celebrating their golden jubilee reunion, will be in the spotlight at the meet at Lady Sivaswami Ayayar Girls' School in Mylapore.

list includes Revathi Menon, Latha, Ramya Krishnan, Aishwarya Rajesh, Brinda Sivakumar and Poornima Rao. Bureaucrats include Janaki Arun Kumar and Sheela Balakrishnan.

All alumni are welcome for the reunion meet.

**Small sustainable businesses might espouse a lofty philosophy, but that does not insulate them against the rough edges of the market, one largely driven by hyper consumerism and a throwaway culture. Here is a survival kit based on the experiences of a few green businesses in Chennai**

**SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL**

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**

Obviously, what applies in the larger business world, applies in the world of small green businesses too. Probably more so here.

Thendral Manimozhi, founder of Kamarkattu Ecostore, a Velachery-based micro enterprise that makes sustainable alternative skincare and homecare products, ensures she walks the brand's customers through its workday realities through Insta reels, quickly crafted and free of frills. In this manner, the brand introduces its customers – even potential customers – to the invisible value that goes into the products through a stringently followed sustainability-driven production process. Over time, in her journey running Boutique Bougainvillea, Sherin realised that working value into her textiles would not suffice; she needed to speak value into them as well. She believes the road to sustaining a brand is paved with education and engagement. She extends an invitation to the boutique's customers to be participants in her brand's story. Sherin's boutique doubles as a "classroom", where customers are introduced to the intricacies of the weaving techniques in use and how the weft of sustainability is drawn through the process.

The customers also get to learn about the artisans behind each piece. "When people step into Boutique Bougainvillea, they step into a story. And once they know that story, it changes the way they see value," says Sherin, adding that her loyal client base is not drawn by the lowest price but by the highest intention. "The people who come to us are looking for something more. They want to feel good about their choices. It is about making a connection – once that bond is formed, it is hard to break."

**LARGER COMMUNITY**

A cause inevitably creates a community; birds of the same feather flocking together and swearing allegiance to the cause. Where sustainability is the cause, micro businesses espousing it should foster the community built around it. Small green businesses need to rally round one another. Through Boutique Bougainvillea, Sherin drives an initiative called The Handmade Story. It is a special event she holds every year to support smaller women-run sustainable businesses. "We offer our space for free," Sherin explains, "and we all pitch in for the marketing, so everyone benefits." The idea is simple: small businesses can come together, show off their work, and help one another grow. It is a perfect example of community support in action, all the while keeping sustainability at the core. Sherin also organises something called Kids Craft Carnival. "It is a fun event where we pick a few kids interested in crafts, mentor them for a month, and then help them showcase their products at an exhibition," she says. For Sherin, the objective is two-fold. It nurtures creativity in the next generation, and also swells the ranks of the green community.

**AI GENERATED IMAGE: M ARIVARASU**

**RESIDENTS' CONNECT**

Increasingly, residents' groups are pushing themselves to the front lines of the circular economy. Sustainable businesses can tap into the reach enjoyed by such associations. Ar. Sherin Joseph of Velachery-based Boutique Bougainvillea (which promotes slow fashion, valuing artisanal wisdom and selling handcrafted clothing) keeps a perennially active communication line with groups such as ROKA. Now, in Chennai, Residents of Kastubanagar Association (ROKA) is an exemplar of an association that has transcended the intrinsic hyperlocality of its green initiatives to create impact far and wide.. ROKA's dry waste drives (its latest scheduled for February 1-2) are usually pan-Chennai events. ROKA has become an inalienable part of Chennai's sustainability scene, being a compelling voice, one commanding attention from many other residents' associations in the metro, GCC and enterprises engaged in the circular economy. Through ROKA, Sherin's green circle got wider, particularly when she was introduced by the Adyar-based residents association to On Axis Green Consulting Pvt. Ltd., which has proved fruitful in terms of learning. In addition, Sherin is engaged in influencing residents in her own neighbourhood, Seva Nagar in Velachery to make eco-friendly choices. Sherin has taken steps to reduce waste in her local community, and as part of that, as recently as January 12, 2025, Boutique Bougainvillea hosted a composting workshop exclusively for Seva Nagar Welfare Association. "We are a small neighbourhood – about 80 households – and we are working on going zero waste," she says. Sherin launched an e-publication to raise awareness on waste management, helping her community live more sustainably.

**STAKEHOLDER MAPPING**

Get the business model right for your small sustainable business – the model that suits your business the best. Mamta Jain of Samposhan (@thesamposhan) seems to be on a mission to promote Sustainable Development Goal 12 (sustainable and efficient use of natural resources and reducing waste). SDG12 pops along to define her, be it her Instagram page or LinkedIn profile. SDG5 too – which is about upholding gender equality and empowering women and girls. Her Adamabakkam-based small business Samposhan prides itself on "saving 1615 plus kg of fabric scraps from Chennai's landfills and converting them into products of everyday use and decor." Here is a valuable insight from Mamta.

Sustainable small businesses often ignore a vital step, stakeholder mapping. In Mamta's words, "I first had a direct-to-consumer (B2C) approach in mind for my brand. The idea was to sell upcycled products directly to individual customers. However, after some time, I realised this model would take longer to yield results than anticipated. While there is a growing awareness of sustainability, convincing consumers to choose upcycled products over traditional ones was a slow process. The demand for these products simply was not as strong as I had hoped. This realisation prompted me to pivot my strategy from B2C to a business-to-business (B2B) and a business-to-government (B2G) model. By targeting corporations, businesses and government bodies, I could reach larger audiences and make a greater impact on sustainability. I saw an opportunity to work with businesses that could incorporate sustainable practices into their operations, as well as government bodies that could help implement policies supporting sustainability. Through these partnerships, I hoped to bring my products to a broader market while encouraging larger-scale environmental practices. The switch from B2C to B2B/B2G allowed me to scale the impact of my products and build relationships that could foster more substantial changes in the industry. This strategy was not only about expanding my customer base, but also about contributing to the larger goal of making sustainability a priority in businesses and government sectors."

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

This section is about efforts, small and big, that are being taken as part of climate action

**A brand story**

Micro enterprise Kamarkattu Ecostore has harnessed the power of authentic storytelling; its Insta reels might be a bit jagged around the edges but they inspire trust for their simplicity and unvarnished presentation

**SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL**

Kamarkattu Ecostore is putting its digital foot impressively forward. Swipe through its Instagram page (@kamarkattu.ecostore) to see how. The micro enterprise puts out visual stories that revel not only in its finished products, but also in the mundane processes that bring those creations to a sustainability shelf.

B

efore anything else, an outline of this Velachery-based enterprise's place under a green sun. It fits the classic mould of a micro business. If you counted its workforce on your fingers, three fingers would remain unfolded: a seven-member, all-women production team. It offers skincare and homecare essentials with the circumflex accent placed firmly on top of sustainable alternatives. It notes it sources toxin-free, natural native ingredients.

B

ack to its Insta page, check out these posts. Titled "Plastic free & proud", a reel with visuals of orders being tucked into eco-friendly packaging presents this line: "Every time we get your orders ready, we smile with pride on how much plastic we avoided." And in a series of posts, it wove a visual story around the Yule season in December 2024, "embossing" recognisably Christmas motifs in its sustainable "soapsheets" (as it calls its small-sized soaps). So, there sat these eco-friendly soaps shaped like Santa, a Christmas tree and a train. This Insta story titled "Soapy's Christmas Story" was accompanied by catchy Yule music. A note that went with it read: "Our girls got so excited with all these cute Christmas soaps and made a little story out of it... we will post the

story one pic every day". And they went on to do just that in the days that followed, creating two characters Bubbles and Soapy made out of their soapsheets who would take the narrative forward.

Thendral Manimozhi, founder and prime mover behind Kamarkattu Ecostore laughs at the recent memory: the idea for "Soapy's Christmas Story" came from someone interning with us, she reveals. The reels carry an endearingly personal touch which actually enables the viewer to gloss over the raggedness around the edges that they carry. The reels seem to have been created off the cuff with the staff themselves featuring in them with hurriedly readied scripts. But it is difficult to question their effectiveness, their dilettante quality being their strength as it inspires trust.

This micro business' strong digital moorings makes sense when you check its date of origin. It was born in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. A civil engineer with 10 years of experience in sales and marketing, Thendral cranked started it following an a-ha moment. It was a moment of truth one that led her to question the effects of using regular toothpaste and soaps. Within the framework of that questioning, she discovered the motivation to create toxin-free products, promote conscious consumerism and also make it an affordable

Popular products by the brand include shampoo bars, dishwash bars, "takeout dishwash powder", laundry powder and a face scrub made with 30 herbs and flowers in powder form. The brand also sells coir, neem and bamboo products from a cooperative society in Kanyakumari.

Thendral notes that they educate customers on sustainability by continuously reiterating the basics. She emphasises the brand's focus on long-lasting products, holding up as illustration a shaving bar used by a customer for over 1.5 years. The name "Kamarkattu" reflects this philosophy, inspired by the lingering sweetness of the candy and the concept of "naked" products, free of toxins and preservatives.

Thendral observes that small sustainable brands often close down due to consumer scrutiny over cost and authenticity, while large brands engaging in greenwashing face less questioning. Despite the challenges, Kamarkattu continues to promote its values of sustainability and conscious consumerism, adds Thendral.



A lighter moment at Kamarkattu Ecostore.

# Transforming hearts through arts



A winning team from the previous edition; (below) teams from Chennai Public School and NSN Memorial School. Photos: Special Arrangement

LIFFY THOMAS

**O**n February 2, more than 200 children from various schools will attend the awards ceremony of 'Art to Connect 2.0' at Kalakshetra Foundation in Thiruvananthapuram.

The event marks the culmination of an initiative to connect children from mainstream schools with children who have special needs. In the run-up to this event, both have showcased their skills in music, dance, painting and singing.

More than 100 schools and 300 specially-abled peers, referred to as "buddies", across major cities participated in the second edition. Four teams (each comprising an able-bodied child and a buddy) were selected as the national winners of 'Art to Connect 2.0'. Besides, awards will be presented in other categories such as "Harmony and Diversity", "Transformative Connect" and "Inclusive Creativity".

Winning is not the ultimate aim of this initiative started by Nirmala Krishnan, who has worn various hats including as principal of Mahindra World School and Country Head Education for the Jindal Group.

The event meets one of the criteria of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 10.3 of reducing inequalities and offering equal opportunities to all. The collaboration is also aimed at fostering empathy, promoting art and culture and encouraging children to develop an emotional connection with society.

Shruti Malaar, a Class XI student

'Art to Connect' unites children from mainstream schools with children who have special needs in a special bond that is crowned by creative pursuits. In its second edition now, the initiative is bringing more schools on board



of Chennai Public School, took this initiative forward to get nine students to enrol for the event. With the help of two teacher coordinators their task was to figure out how to bond with the buddies and co-create a piece of art together.

Shruti was assigned the role of videographer-cum-editor where she had to shoot the work of teams to get the best out of them.

"I volunteered for this event as I wanted to overcome my fears of interacting with children with special needs and this role got me to experience nine stories," says Shruti. Wielding a Nikon camera, she captured a variety of emotions as her schoolmates engaged with buddies from Apple Valley Special School.

Nehan, for instance, was paired with a student on the spectrum to work on a piece of art. But when the buddy saw other teams dancing he too wanted to dance. Harshini's buddy did not want to communicate in a certain way and she had to mellow down her conversational style to ensure she felt safe.

"I got to converse and cap-

## The process

Schools are required to register with Art to Connect and agree with a set of rules and regulations for the event. There is no entry fee, and every participating team is required to send a one-minute video of their interaction and another one-minute video of their art.

Entries must also be uploaded with a 600-word write-up about their journey. For details, visit [linkthethdots.online](http://linkthethdots.online) or email [linkthethdots13@gmail.com](mailto:linkthethdots13@gmail.com)

ture so many emotions of excitement, comfort, adaptation during this exercise," says the 17-year-old.

It took some doing for Varnika A., a Class XI student of NSN Memorial School, to teach the dance steps to her buddy Hemanya, who is dyslexic, but the end result was a beautiful bond. "I first made her comfortable asking about her likes and dislikes before we started to practise some steps. What I liked was she was open to learning and I just had to be patient till she got them right," says Varnika.

NSN Group of Schools had 15 students taking part in the event, where the school joined hands with Vatsalya Open Schooling. "We brought students from the Centre

to our campus. While the rapport was built on the same day, a few required more time and a different approach," says Shyamala V., coordinator for this event from the school.

Other noteworthy entries include a national winner from a school at Kamathipura, a neighbourhood with social fractures in Mumbai. "Some schools have told me that their students had an emotional transformation by bonding with a peer," says Nirmala.

There is also an international winner from Tajikistan, Zuhra, who danced with Amir, a boy with speech impairment.

## Growing strong

The first edition of 'Art to Connect' was held in 2020 with 20 schools qualifying for the finals. This time, it has grown to more than double the number. Last year, Pune registered the maximum number of participants. This time, Tamil Nadu tops the list.

Nirmala says this is an event for mainstream schools and she expects them to do the ground work of locating a buddy.

"In Delhi, many schools have children with special needs across classes but that is not the case in the South," she says.

Nirmala says the larger goal of Art to Connect is to strengthen the bond and show children the need to cultivate patience, compassion, empathy and gratitude. The jury looks at the effort made by a participant to bond.

As part of the competition, participants also take a pledge that when they grow up and attain positions of power they will try to bring in policies that are inclusive.

"Transformation is what I am looking for and this is just the beginning," says Nirmala, who comes from the pharmaceutical industry and has authored books on education.

## Graduation day held

The New College organised its Graduation Day with great enthusiasm on January 23. The event was graced by K. Radhakrishnan, former Director General of Police; he presented certificates to the graduating students, says a press release. The ceremony was attended by esteemed members of the management, including Janab Imthiaz Pasha Sahib, president of MEASI; Janab Elias Sait Sahib, honorary Secretary & Correspondent, and Janab

S.M.A. Mohamed Saleem Sahib, treasurer. Retired professors, principals, and several members of the faculty were also present to mark the occasion. Principal M. Asrar Sheriff welcomed the gathering, while Vice Principal T.K. Shabeer and Controller of Examinations A. Syed Sarmad Ahmed organised the event, the release adds.

### A hackathon

More than 70 undergraduate students from across the State



unleashed their creativity at the recently held 'Innohack 25,' a technical hackathon conducted by MEASI Institute of Information Technology.

Twenty-five teams took part in the finals. SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, bagged the first prize for Internet of Things, followed by Chevalier T. Thomas Elizabeth College for Women in Perambur for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Islamiah College, Vaniyambadi, for their AI-based dietary plan project.

The special prize was awarded to The New College, Royapettah, and the SRM team.

## Sports day at college



The 26th sports day of Sri Kanya Parameshwari Arts & Science College for Women was held on January 24. Students who excelled in sports were honoured and this included N. Swetha Shree of B.A. Sociology who won a gold medal in the Open National Athletics Championship. Students presented various performances including mallakhamb.

## Workshop on heritage conservation

Hepzibah Institute of Heritage Conservation is conducting a workshop on conservation and restoration of antiquities of a church from February 3 to 8. Time: From 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. For venue details, call 9381008253. According to a press release, no fee will be charged.

Hepzibah Institute of Heritage Conservation is at 21, VOC Street, MGR Nagar.

## Two retirement community projects launched

The GT Bharathi Urban Developers Private Limited has launched two retirement community projects – 'Elements Sattva' in Porur and 'Elements Kamalam.'

The Sattva project allows senior citizens to reside within the city. The other project has introduced an 'Independent Seniors' Leasing (ISL) scheme, which allows seniors to lease their homes at 50

percent of the purchase cost, offering investors good rental returns, said a release.

To offer seniors and their families a first-hand experience of retirement homes, the real estate housing firm is conducting an expo at Ethiraja Kalyana Mandapam, TTK Road in Alwarpet that ends on January 26.

## INMO training camp

The Indian National Mathematics Olympiad Training Camp was held at P.S. Senior Secondary School recently with 33 students who qualified for the Regional Mathematics Olympiad from different schools in Chennai, Puducherry and Andaman Nicobar Islands region participating in it. Revathy Parameswaran, principal of P.S. Senior Secondary School, is the regional coordinator for Mathematics Olympiads. Students who qualify in INMO will participate in the National Camp and become eligible for consideration to represent India at the International Math Olympiad. The training was conducted by resource persons from CMI, students who had won medals in the International Olympiad in the previous years and experts from premier institutes.

## Special puja

Ahead of the Board examination season, Sri Vidya Abhivirithi Sankalpa Archanai will be held at Sri Vedantha Desikar Devasthanam in Mylapore. For further details call 044-24953799 /43863747

## Shop for maternity clothes online

Expecting moms and new parents do not have to go searching for maternity and baby wear. STB Delivery Kit, an online store, provides comfortable clothing for moms-to-be and their little ones.

The store is offering discounts to celebrate the opening of the enterprise, including 20 percent off on the first purchase and bundle offers on select products, said a release.

Customers can enjoy free shipping on select orders. Log on to www.stbdeliverykit.com. For orders, WhatsApp 87546 00468.

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## ROKA's 10th waste collection drive on February 1 and 2

**R**esidents of Kasturbanagar Association (ROKA) has inked in its 10th waste collection drive – based on the theme “Together We Can” – for February 1 and 2, 2025 (from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days). The drive is spread across five centres.

(ROKA) has been in the solid waste management and environment work since 2018 and has so far, through just its collection drives, diverted close to 60 MT of waste into effective processing, says a press release.

The items that are being handed over can be in any condition but should be clean and dry. Items that are soiled and dirty would be rejected, the press release adds.

The following categories of items can be brought to the collection points – clothes; footwear; bags; e-waste; tablet strips; ballpoint pens; mattresses/ pillows (accepted only at the collection point in Adyar); X ray films; glass bottles; hard and soft plastics and newspaper and books

Many apartment communities in Perumbakkam, Adambakkam and residents associations in Kotturpuram, Nawab Gardens, Vadapalani, Karpagam Gardens are part of this drive, the release adds. The recycling partners are: Recycle Mart, SPRECO Recycling Pvt. Ltd., and Wasted 360.

For more details, call 86674 99135.



Snapshots of previous editions of the event. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### The collection centres

1. KNRA Hall in Adyar
2. On Axis, Velachery
3. RMSM aastn - The Public Gym,

Sivakamipuram Second Cross in Thiruvanmiyur  
4. Spreco recycling facility in West Tambaram  
5. Singaravelan Oceanside Welfare Association (SOWA) in Chinna Nee-lankarai

## Threads of empowerment

In February, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya Skill Development Centre will start a course in communicative English for women, adding to the three other programmes it already offers

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**I**n her 30s, life took a turn for Radha (name changed). It was the pandemic and she lost her husband. The income she managed running a canteen at a school was not steady; and it would not meet the needs of her two children. That is when she got introduced to a beautician course run by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya Skill Development Centre. Radha today is content working in a neighbourhood beauty parlour where she dabbles in different roles and responsibilities and has a steady income. The Centre is next working to get her a certificate from the Skill Development Council and that will empower her to start her own enterprise.

Two years since this skill development centre was started to mark the 125th anniversary of Ramakrishna Mission, many young women and homemakers have been trained in tailoring, aari work and beautician courses. “We started by conducting a meeting with parents of our schools and had 20 people showing interest in the three-month tailoring programme,” says Rama Kashyap, who is in-charge of the skill development centre. The Ramakrishna Mission runs five schools in and around T. Nagar.

A majority of the participants are mothers of children studying in the school although it is open to any deserving woman who wants to be financially independent by learning a new skill.

“One of our student’s mother was a skilled tailor and she became the teacher along with another trainer,” says Rama.

The centre got kickstarted thanks to the generosity of the alumni association.



At the skill development centre.

### A REUNION

Old students of Sri RKM Sarada Vidyalaya Girls Higher Secondary School are meeting at the school campus on Usman Road for its annual reunion. All old students are welcome to attend the meet which starts at 10.30 a.m.

“The first 10 tailoring machines were contributed by the alumni which was a big impetus for the programme to take off,” says Rama. Whenever any new programme begins at the Centre, a message is sent out to the alumni group so that they can support it and also spread the word about it.

Rama says that the skill development centre will be taking up a full scale impact study this year and seek feedback on what course correction needs to be made.

“In February, we will be starting communicative English classes for women,” she says.

The skill development centre is at 104 GN Chetty Road, T. Nagar. For details about the next batch, call 9940027108

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