

T. NAGAR

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Gerugambakkam » Mangadu » Choolaimedu » Egmore » K K Nagar » Kodambakkam » Virugambakkam » Somangalam » Poonamalee » Chetpet



OLD AND WISE

While addressing the emptiness in their own lives, two residents of Adyar, Jayanthi Sekhar and Pushya Sitaraman, have managed to ease the loneliness of many senior citizens who find themselves in a similar situation **P5**



FEELING THE PULSE OF A STREET AND A NEIGHBOURHOOD

An open house on March 21, 22 and 23 that is being organised as part of an initiative titled The Pelathope Urban Living Lab will explore the questions of social cohesion and meaningful development in neighbourhoods **P4**

Saligramam RWA supports a social cause



from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Cooked food and snacks will be accepted. However, raw meat, milk, alcoholic beverages, food packages without appropriate labels and expiry dates, and leftovers will not be accepted, says the press release.

The residents welfare association of Kaveri Ranganagar will also support this initiative by spreading awareness about this charity programme, adds the release.

"M.D. Ghani, an office-bearer of the association is instrumental in bringing this charity programme to Kaveri Ranganagar. Further, a good number of residents and traders of the colony have come forward to ensure the refrigerator is well-stocked at the stipulated hours," says S. Sundaresan, the association's vice-president.

A social initiative called *Ayyam Ittu Unn* (which means donate before you eat) started by dentist Dr. M. Issa Fathima Jasmine has been extended to Kaveri Ranganagar in Saligramam.

The initiative was manifested at 17/5 B, K.K. Salai in Kaveri Ranganagar, Saligramam. The facility was inaugurated in the pre-

sence of Dr. Fathima and office-bearers and members of Kaveri Ranganagar Narpani Mandram, the residents welfare association of the neighbourhood.

According to a press release from the association, as part of this initiative, a refrigerator with food items would be made available for the needy for free. The food will be available

College holds a meet on applied mathematics

The Department of Mathematics, SRMIST Vadapalani, organised an International Conference on Innovations & Recent Trends in Applied Mathematics.

The conference provided a platform for researchers to explore emerging trends and innovative approaches in applied mathematics. Distinguished guests inaugurating the event included Prof Ismail Naci Cangul (Bursa Uludag University, Turkey), Prof. Dr. Kavikumar Jacob (Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Malaysia); Prof. G. Mahadevan (Gandhigram Rural Institute, Tamil Nadu); alongside C. V. Jayakumar (Dean, FET, SRMIST Vadapalani), C. Rajesh (Convener & HoD/Maths), and Coordinators S. Thalpathiraj and J. Ravikumar.

Out of 160 registered participants, 137 attended the conference, said a release.

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Pedestrian space usurped



Pile-ups of waste on SSR Pankajam Road in Saligramam. The image was taken on March 13. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

Exercise equipment not in a healthy state



▼ The mechanical pedal exerciser is a regular feature of GCC parks. Jeeva Park has one that is as resolutely avoided by visitors as would be a freezing cold dessert by someone battling sinusitis. The equipment is alarmingly rusty and according to a regular visitor who does not want their name revealed, it has been in this derelict state for six months.

Cloth bag vending machines opened at six locations in south region

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 'Meendum Manjappai' campaign has got a boost. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, which has been installing these vending machines at strategic locations, has got the support of Greater Chennai Corporation to expand this initiative aimed at reducing the use of single-use plastics.

On March 14, the automated cloth vending machines were inaugurated at six locations in south zone covering Thiruvanniyur, Palavakkam, Sholinganallur, Valasaravakkam and Nanganallur. The chosen locations are either near a market, temple or supermarket.

"Over the years, TNPCB has been involved in installing and maintaining these vending machines. This is the first time in South Chennai that GCC has played a key role," says N. Nireshkumar, superintendent of parks, GCC. Recently, 10 vending machines were installed in Central and North zones by GCC, he says.

GCC chose locations where the



The locations

- Zone XI office in Valasaravakkam
- Division 153 office in Porur, near Saravana Stores
- 4th Main Road, Nanganallur
- Thiruvanniyur market
- Division office (183), Palavakkam
- Near Nilgiris supermarket, Model School Road, Sholinganallur

footfall is on higher side and there is a noticeable demand for eco-friendly bags. "A vending machine was installed at Nanganallur Fourth Main Road, which has a

market, park and temple close by. Likewise, one is placed near the Thiruvanniyur market," says the official.

Out of the six machines, five were sponsored by TNPCB, and one was procured by GCC.

According to a press release, the Manjappai vending machine, designed by Instagood Technologies Pvt. Ltd., is an IoT-based smart vending system that offers a simple, hassle-free solution for acquiring cloth bags. Users can insert a ₹10 coin or currency note, or make a cashless transaction through UPI payment options. The machine has a storage capacity of 500 bags and can be quickly restocked. It is accessible for the physically challenged.

The vending machine enables real-time tracking of stock levels, machine health, and transaction data across multiple locations.

"There is a plan to install more such vending machines in the coming months and we will be studying the response at all these places," the official adds.

READERS WRITE

'Toilets remain closed in these railway stations'

The toilets at the following railway stations are closed most of the days: St. Thomas Mount, Guindy, Saidapet Mambalam, Kodambakkam, Nungambakkam, Chetpet, and Egmore. It should be noted that sub-urban train services is an important mode of public transport for Chennai residents. But basic facilities are lacking at these stations.

S. Balamurugan
Alandur



'All buses should halt at Church Park bus stop'



The Church Park bus stop at the Thousand Lights stretch of Anna Salai witnesses a good number of commuters. But not all Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses halt here. Especially, the services to Foreshore Estate, Tambaram, Poonamalee, and Kundrathur skip this stop. This is inconvenient as commuters have to go to the nearby stops – either to DMS or to Thousand Lights – which are a bit far. Metropolitan Transport Corporation must look into this.

V. Johan Dhanakumar

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Carelessly placed bins often add to a traffic problem at Arunachalam Street



On Arunachalam Street in Chintadripet, this is usually the last of discomfitures that makes the collective sigh of motorists drown the combined hum of their engines. A garbage bin not properly slotted into its bay; and another without a bay that stands by its side. At night the giant garbage truck with its hydraulic arm lifts the garbage bins, empties them into its garbage loading space, and places them back on the road. It is in that moment, at that nocturnal hour, a traffic knot for the next day is scripted in a hurry. A bay for one bin sits on Kalavai street where it meets Arunachalam Street. The garbage truck does not slot the bin back into the bay, almost always; and as a result, this bin as well as the one without a bay take a bite out of Arunachalam Street, constricted and now made more constricted by an infrastructure work that is parked uncomfortably like a tick on the eyelid of a canine. On Arunachalam Street, following the construction of a new stormwater drain (parallel to the old one that is not in use), Greater Chennai Corporation is laying a pavement. The pavement has been laid in parts, and an equal number of parts wait wistfully for the new pavement. The ground has been cleared for this work and debris of the effort lies around to pedestrians' and even motorists' irritation. Kalavai Street is bisected by Arunachalam Street, and these garbage bins are located on the northern section of Kalavai Street. This point forms a crossroads, and during rush hour, when vehicles pour in from both the southern and northern sections of Kalavai Street a greater strain is placed on a narrow-and-made-narrower-now Arunachalam Street. A habitue of the street who wants to remain unnamed reveals he has complained many a time about this, but in vain. The crew of the garbage truck do not bother to tuck one bin into the bay and the other, along with it, into Kalavai Street. This easily remediable situation ought to be remedied. And the pavement on Arunachalam Street needs to be laid without any delay. The images were taken on March 12, 2025 at an hour easy on the traffic. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



Women Entrepreneur Award presented

The Rotary Club of Madras East, in collaboration with the family of Late Mrs. Rajeshwari, held the annual Women Entrepreneur Award on March 6. Every year, the Women Entrepreneur Award is conferred upon a distinguished woman who has made a significant impact in the business world. The award was conferred upon Namrata Sundaresan, co-founder of Käse Cheese for her commitment to excellence, sustainability, and social impact, said a release. She was honoured with the Nari Shakti Puraskar by the President of India in 2018.

Namrata spoke about how she and co-founder Anu's desire to start a baking unit for differently-abled women turned into a cheesemaking venture.

Special guests at the event were Dr. Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan, trustee and director, Sundaram Medical Foundation and Dr. Rangarajan Memorial Hospital; founder and executive director, CANSTOP.

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Feeling the pulse of a street and a neighbourhood

An open house on March 21, 22 and 23 that is being organised as part of an initiative titled The Pelathope Urban Living Lab will explore the questions of social cohesion and meaningful development in neighbourhoods



Event Details:

Dates & Timings

March 21 (5 p.m. - 8 p.m.)

March 22 (9 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

March 23 (9 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

Location: New No. 11, Old No. 6, Pelathope Vedanta Desika Swami Street, Mylapore, Chennai 600004

the rich history and cultural heritage of Mylapore.” As the name suggests, the Open House is open to all, and it is aimed at discussing “opportunities to collaborate in setting up a meaningful community design initiative focussed on the neighbourhood scale as part of the urban living lab.”

The open house would be marked by exhibitions, archival showcases, guided walkthroughs, and community conversations (which allow visitors to can engage with architects, historians and residents about the past, present and future of Mylapore).

The communication notes the Open House would witness the launch of two key initiatives: The Pelathope Community Archives and The Mylapore 15-Minute Cultural Neighbourhood Map.

The communication elaborates that the Pelathope Community Archive consists of oral histories from previously unrecorded or forgotten narrators, archival photographs, and documents highlighting the history of Pelathope and Mylapore, organised around thematic areas of culture, community, infrastructure/planning, and ecology. This exercise is underpinned by the hope that the “discovery of unexplored histories will resonate with others in the neighbourhood, leading to alternative readings of Mylapore that can foster a better understanding

of the dynamics of neighbourhood change.”

The communication adds: “The Mylapore 15-Minute Cultural Neighborhood Map is a crowd-sourced document that seeks to highlight the unique cultural heritage of the neighbourhood. This serves as a starting point for creating a broad-based and inclusive (re)development framework that leverages the cultural and heritage assets of Mylapore. The expected focus of this framework includes enhancing the local economy, preserving and enhancing tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and identifying high-impact community projects such as last-mile connectivity interventions and shared community spaces that can improve social cohesion and tangibly enhance the quality of life in Mylapore.”

The organisers are also running a photo contest – Mylapore Through Your Lens – which will be exhibiting shortlisted entries and announcing winners at the Open House.

Two structures would be central to the exercise. One popularly known as 40 Pelathope (which now goes by the new number 16 while retaining its old number 40) is steeped in history; so are the three row houses right opposite this structure. A section of the row houses which underwent a renovation, one that was easy on its original character, will mark the physical space of the Pelathope Urban Living Lab by being a congregating point for residents as well as entities that have the agency to effect positive changes in Pelathope as well as the rest of Mylapore.

A view of Pelathope; and a close look at ‘40 Pelathope’, a famous address on the street. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

Though running parallel to North Mada Street, Pelathope hardly shares in its spotlight. Pelathope is a cul-de-sac and its days unspool to a rather fixed script with little room for improvisation. The odds are high that anyone unfamiliar with Mylapore has not heard of

Pelathope (which means “jackfruit grove” in Tamil). Even Google maps would be silent on it: as this old name of the street is overshadowed by an official name, one popularised by Google Maps – Vedanta Desika Swami Street.

Next weekend – March 21, 22 and 23 – is going to be in the public

glare as a result of what is called The Pelathope Urban Living Lab – Open House, an initiative by SKDO in collaboration with PLUS, Curating for Culture, UCAN and Cultural Heritage Narratives.

According to a communication from the organisers, the initiative offers an “opportunity to explore



During a recent meetup held at a member's house in Mylapore where participants played traditional games; and (below) Pushya Sitaraman (third from left) and Jayanthi Sekhar standing next to her.



Old and wise

While addressing the emptiness in their own lives, two sisters, Jayanthi Sekhar and Pushya Sitaraman, have managed to ease the loneliness of many senior citizens who find themselves in a similar situation

LIFY THOMAS

Recently, in an ancestral house in Mylapore, traditional games kept a gathering enthralled. The sight of shells moving across a wooden board revived memories of *pallanguzhi*. There was a game of Seven Stones. Paramapadam and *aadu puli* were among other games that took a motley group of senior citizens down memory lane. Numbering over 20, the group had gathered at the house of a member as part of the monthly activity of Wise Owl Club.

Led by two sisters - Jayanthi Sekhar and Pushya Sitaraman - the activities of the Club are run under the Wise Owl Foundation, a registered body born in October 2023. Wise Owl Club currently has 40 members and is keen on growing bigger.

The forum was started for senior citizens looking for a recreational club that is off the beaten track. The meetups do not have a fixed venue or date - they are held either at a club or a member's house.

The idea to start a recreational club for seniors came up when the sisters themselves were trying to



infuse fresh meaning into their lives.

"Our children are away and there is some emptiness, that is when we thought of starting this club," says 65-year-old Jayanthi, a resident of Adyar, who was helping the family business before starting the Foundation.

The curated workshops try to offer activities that people are really longing to take up or something that they had grown out of but now want to return to.

Book owls, gardening owls, theatre arts owls, creative owls, playful owls, healthy owls and arm-chair travel are the broad themes of these workshops, offered to members as well as non-members.



In the book owls, for instance, participants stitched a story together - each adding a para in what would finally emerge as an audio book.

Nostalgia is a big hook at these workshops. Pushya, a practising lawyer who is in her 70s, recalls how two ladies discovered that they went to the same school and was taught Bharathiya songs by the same teacher during a session to remember the writer and poet.

While experts are brought in for the workshops, in some cases members would volunteer be the resource person.

The cause

Until last year, Wise Owl Club has been conducting two activities a month - one online and the other offline. While the online events are free to attend, the in-person ones levy a nominal fee for workshops as they would entail the purchase of material such as canvas and paint.

The recent one at Mylapore was a free meetup. There were many new faces among the participants.

"If any of our members offers to host a meetup, we encourage it, as that has the potential of bringing a new set of people on board," says

Jayanthi, adding that K.R. Jambunathan and wife Visalakshi were invited as special guides to help participants get their moves right in the games.

The sisters have been trying to pass on the benefits of such recreational activities to an old age home in the city.

"Whatever little we get conducting activities from our paid workshops is used to conduct similar activities at an old age home," says Jayanthi. This year, Pushya says, they want to conduct at least one such workshop every quarter at an old age home

Cycling

is just what this doctor ordered

LIFFY THOMAS

If you happen to see a bicycle with a board in Tamil on it that offers a pitch for cycling as “a cheap and an effective medicine”, then the cyclist is likely from a clinic in Old Pallavaram. The founder of BHS Geriatrics and Diabetes Centre in Old Pallavaram, Dr. B. Hari Shankar encourages his staff and patients to take up cycling to beat lifestyle diseases. He practises what he preaches.

“My staff and patients would have never seen me in a car or motorcycle as I cycle to the clinic every day from my home in Nanganallur, a distance of around eight kilometres,” says Dr. Hari Shankar, who has been running this clinic in Old Pallavaram (as well as one in Keelkatalai) for the last 14 years.

In the morning, on his way to the



clinic, he often drops his daughter at her school in Keelkattalai.

In fact, Hari Shankar started cycling inspired by the words of a patient's son-in-law who had a stint in Japan where cycling is common.

To encourage his staff to bicycle to work, the management offers a monthly travel allowance of ₹1000. Besides, it covers expense incurred in maintaining the bicycle such as changing the tyres and any other unexpected repairs. “Employees

have to produce the bill to get the amount,” says the geriatric physician who is a graduate of Chengalpattu Medical College.

Employees not keen on investing in this eco-friendly mode need not bother as the centre has a ready pool of bicycles - more than 20 cycles ready to hit the road. These were bought gradually over the months. “Many are gently used cycles that we got repaired to the point that they look new,” he says.

Time taken to cycle on the busy roads is often a deterrent to switch entirely to this green mode of transport.

Nurse S. Banu is one of them. For the last two years, she has been availing the ₹1000 allowance every month. She cycles close to 10 km from her home in Velachery to the centre in Old Pallavaram, and swears that cycling has been an ef-



Dr B Hari Shankar of BHS Diabetes and Geriatrics Centre

fective way to lose weight.

Social health worker P. Radhakrishnan, who had a history of health issues, is another inspira-

tion. His cycling habit and work at the centre which involves cutting wood ensures him a good night's sleep. A nurse who comes from Nanganallur is also a diehard cyclist.

Recently, a patient at the centre sought a bicycle and found his request met. Dr. Hari Shankar says he tells his patients and senior citizens that running, cycling and walking are effective ways to beat lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes, sleep apnea, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

“Generally an invention brings solution for one and problem for the other, so we have adopted several practices on a trial and error basis. Like food at the centre is cooked on firewood and vegetables are served half cooked. We get wood from carpenters and from households that are planning to discard them,” he says.

The centre has 50 full-time employees on its rolls and does not like to impose anything on patients and staff.

Like a few of the young female nurses found it odd to cycle with the board so it was removed for them. “One size approach does not suit all,” adds the doctor.

Rowing down the Adyar river for five decades

Five former employees of Parry & Co. recall the time when they were part of a title-winning team



(From left) Revi Thomas, Rabindranath Rao, S. Radhakrishnan, Naresh Vassudhev and P Venkatram have served on the managing committee of Madras Boat Club in different capacities over the years.



The Parry & Co. team that won the Challenge Fours Trophy in 1975: (L to R) Rabindranath Rao, Revi C Thomas (Bow), K. R. Ganapathy (Coxswain); S. Radhakrishnan (stroke) and H. T. Bhaskar Rao.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

K. KEERTHIVASAN

In the mornings, around 6 a.m., both on weekdays and weekends, one can spot a small group of men who are in their 70s, rowing down the Adyar river, cracking jokes as they go.

They are no ordinary folks. The five rowers, Revi Thomas, Rabindranath Rao, S. Radhakrishnan, Naresh Vassudhev and P. Venkatram, all former employees of Parry & Co., who won medals at major regatta events in the 70s and early 80s, are still at it, waking up early in the morning, going to Ma-

dras Boat Club and rowing with all the joy that the sport brings. Naresh and Revi, who rowed for MBC, were honoured with the prestigious Club Colours.

In fact, Parry & Co. won the Challenge Fours Trophy, a main event in the prestigious Merchants and Bankers Trophy, for two consecutive years in 1974 and 1975. Barring a few, members of that winning team are still maintaining a link with rowing.

S. Radhakrishnan, part of Parry team that won the Challenge Fours Trophy, says it feels great to be part of the sport for 50 long years and still rowing.

“Every morning, we sit togeth-

er and reminisce about those days, at the Madras Boat Club. Whenever we are in Chennai, we meet and row at MBC. We have been rowing for 50 years now. We are at MBC at 5.30 a.m. and finish our warm-up by 5.45 a.m. and by 6 a.m. we start racing. It is such a good feeling that at 82 I am able to row six kilometres. Of course, the body feels the pain, but it is a pleasurable pain,” laughs Radhakrishnan.

Seventy-six-year-old Rabindranath Rao, who was part of the team that won the Challenge Fours Trophy twice, says winning the titles felt great. “When we won the tournament in 1974 after 17 years, our Managing Director invited us to the boardroom and everyone celebrated. We were thrilled,” Rao recalls.

Rao enjoys the time with his close friends at MBC. “We keep meeting regularly and are close friends. Once you start rowing, you cannot forget your crew so easily. We race for 10 km; there is rigorous training,” he adds.

Thomas is now a member of MBC, as are Radhakrishna Rao and S. Radhakrishnan. The 77-year-old, who was part of the two titles, is supremely active, ready to row at MBC at 5.45 p.m. “It is not that we meet every day, we meet whenever we can. We do row with different members. It feels great to row,” he says.

The senior citizens are not just content rowing, they continue to train young rowers at MBC. “We also love to coach youngsters. It is very satisfying,” says Revi.



CUMTA and StartupTN conduct contest on urban mobility

AI, data and GIS professionals, students and start-ups are invited; the last date for registration is March 28

Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) in association with StartupTN has come up with a contest called Urban Move wherein participants are expected to develop innovative solutions for urban mobility challenges in Chennai.

The contest was officially launched by I. Jeyakumar, Member Secretary, CUMTA, and Sivarajah Ramanathan, Mission Director & CEO, StartupTN.

According to a press release, AI and data enthusiasts, GIS experts, students, individuals, start-ups and mobility professionals are invited.

The contest aims to address transportation issues such as lack of reliable public transport information, increasing traffic congestion, and the absence of a unified database for civic infrastructure and road asset management, says the press release. Hence, the organisers of the contest have laid down five themes which are the following:

Interactive open web map

Developing an interactive web-based map visualizing transit modes, routes, and stops while ensuring accessibility across devices and also suggest solutions for disseminating transit information to non-digital users.

Seamless ticketing

Simplifying public transportation ticketing by designing an IoT or AI-powered solution that eliminates the need for smartphone apps, ensuring universal accessibility while enhancing fare collection efficiency.



Traffic congestion on GST Road in Perungalathur on February 24, 2025; and (below) the launch of the contest. PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Infrastructure mapping

Creating an AI-driven mobile application to crowdsource mapping and auditing of urban infrastructure, detecting footpaths, potholes, tree coverage, speed breakers, and safety conditions during night using smartphone cameras and GPS.

AI-based traffic data

Utilizing real-time CCTV footage and AI detection to analyse traffic flow, classify vehicle types, optimize signal timings, forecast congestion, and enhance traffic management.

Augmented reality

Developing an AR-based mobile application to map, visualize, and

manage urban utilities such as pipelines, electrical lines, sewage systems, and surface infrastructure in a 3D interactive environment.

To register visit:
<https://cumta.tn.gov.in/openinnovationchallenge>

Last date for registration is March 28.

Winners of the contest will receive support in company incorporation, mentorship opportunities, collaborative projects with government departments, and internship opportunities with CUMTA, says the press release.

For details, call 044 - 24322377 / 044 - 28552355.

Railway staff honoured



In commemoration of International Women's Day, Southern Railway Women's Headquarters Organization (SRWHQO) felicitated 26 women employees in recognition of their exemplary work during last year.

According to a press release, over 100 women including officials and staff attended the event which was inaugurated by Sonia Singh, president, SRWHQO, in the presence of Rekha Kaushal, vice-president, SRWHQO. Various Cultural events were also part of the celebration.



A grand gesture by Aavin women's forum

In commemoration of International Women's Day, Aavin Women Welfare Association made a financial donation to charity centres including: Vishranthi Old-age Home, Gnanadharhan Home for Visually Challenged, Samarpana Home for Mentally-retarded. Officials from Aavin - Tamilnadu Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited took part in the event, says a press release.

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