

T. NAGAR

Saidapet » West Mambalam » Vadapalani » Porur » Kattupakkam » Irungattukottai » Nungambakkam » Manapakkam » Ashok Nagar » Valasaravakkam

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



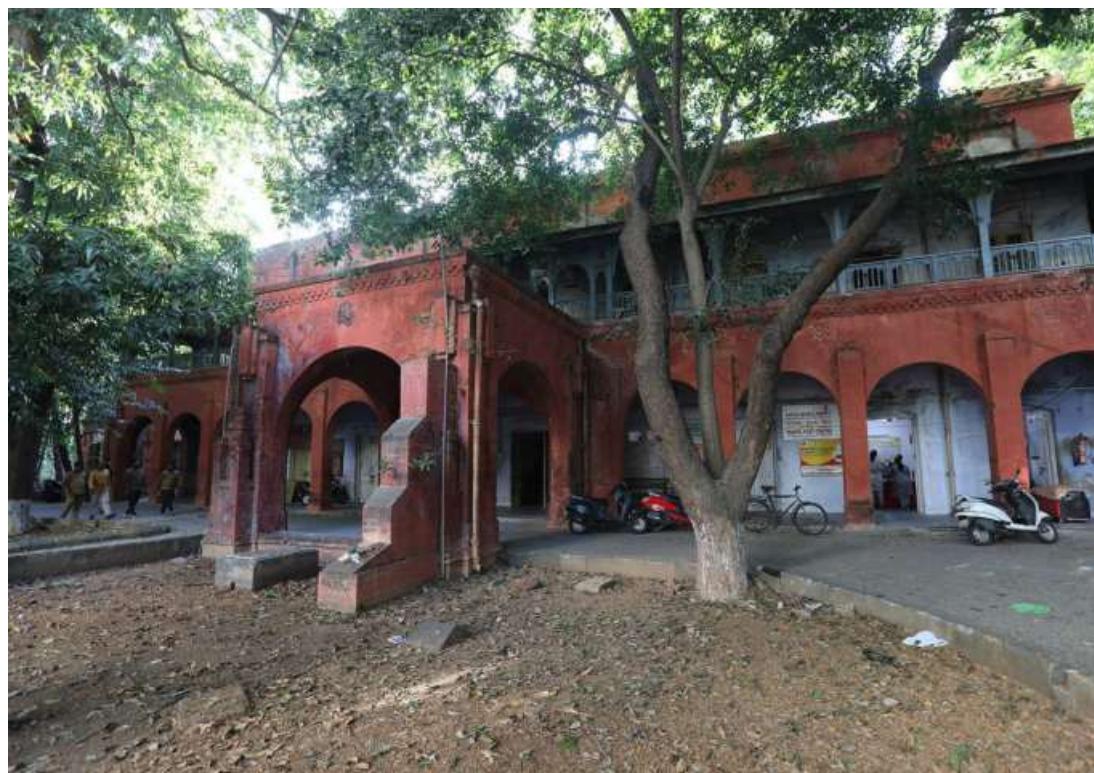
OUT FOR A CHARGE

Have you spotted the latest addition to the landscape: an EV station next to a supermarket or any other major congregating point? Private players and even Greater Chennai Corporation are seeking to establish charging points in locations that can be quickly and comfortably accessed **P5**



ON THE TAIL OF A TAGGED CURLEW SANDPIPER

At the end of every wintering season, one can have only a broad idea about where a migratory bird would breed, unless it is tagged **P6**



The heritage building; the all-women post office; the canteen building under renovation; and the creche, on April 24, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



A mix of *quiet and bustle*

The campus connected with postal services, located on Ethiraj Salai in Egmore, is multi-faceted in a way that not many are aware of

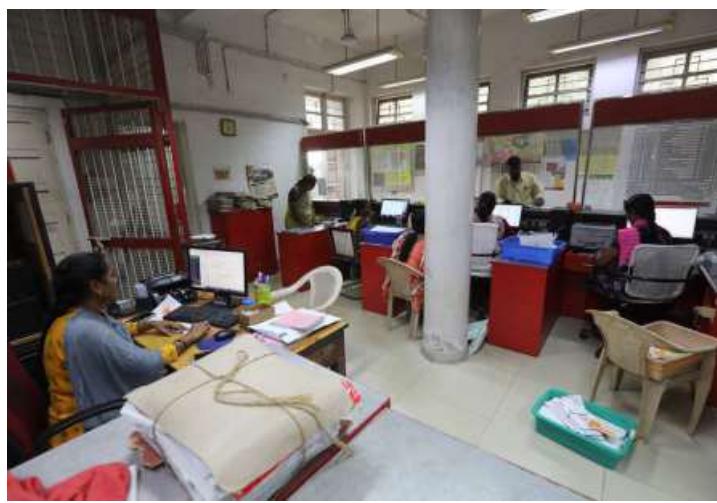
BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Number 5 & 7 on Ethiraj Salai in Egmore is associated with heritage. The Office of the General Manager, Postal Accounts and Finance functions from the sprawling premises.

Amidst the bustle that inevitably goes with an office of such gravitas and stature, stands a ochre-red building that is physically united to its past, but is aligned with the spirit of the campus.

It allows itself to be led into the daily grind, parcel post services being operated from its ground floor. The grandeur of this building can put the other buildings in the shade unless one drops in regularly for transactions with any of the sections.

If that is the case, one would not have missed the helpful services offered by some of these sections. One of them is the all-women



men post office which has received good reviews from users particularly for the Aadhar-related services it offers. The all-women post office operates between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and the Aadhar registration and allied services can be availed between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The next stop is the

canteen known beyond the gates for its purse-friendly, clean gastronomic fare. Its old building under renovation, the canteen has been temporarily shifted to a makeshift facility now. The office also runs a handy, well-appointed, artistically designed creche to take care of the children of the employees.

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'Restore U-turn at Jhafferkhanpet junction'



The closed Jhafferkhanpet junction; and the junction at Bharathidasan Colony Main Road which has a U-turn is often chaotic on account of oncoming traffic.
PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B



Federation of Residential Welfare Associations, West Jhafferkhanpet, seeks the restoration of U-Turn at Kasi theatre junction on 100 Feet Jawaharlal Nehru Main Road (JN Main Road).

Since the closing of the U-turn, West Jhafferkhanpet residents

have had to cover extra ground to cross JN Main Road.

"Citing traffic congestion, the U-turn was closed two years ago. Since then, we have to take a U-turn at Ashok Pillar junction, Bharathidasan Colony junction, or using the underpass near Adyar river to cross JN Main Road. Ashok Pillar

junction is a bit far and during peak hours, congested. At Bharathidasan Colony junction, motorcyclists are allowed to take a U-turn but it is narrow, and those taking a U-turn have to watch out for vehicles coming from Ashok Nagar 11th Avenue as well as those rolling down JN Main Road. Dur-

ing rains, the underpass gets inundated with sewage-mixed rainwater," says the federation's secretary, P. Sudhakar.

The closing of the U-turn has entailed a change in the route of 5E bus service (Besant Nagar - Vadapalani via KK Nagar, Jhafferkhanpet and Saidapet) is disturbed

due to the U-turn is closed.

"Since the U-turn closure, 5E bus takes 11th Avenue Ashok Nagar and its original route resumes from ESI hospital on Anna Main Road. This affects commuters from Jhafferkhanpet," adds Sudhakar.

Text L. Kanthimathi

READERS WRITE

'CMWSSB's water supply is contaminated with sewage'

It is just a month since Ambal Nagar and Balambika Nagar in Ramapuram started to receive piped drinking water supply from Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board. But the water is contaminated with sewage.

Until CMWSSB started supply, Ambal Nagar and Balambika Nagar were receiving water through the decades-old pipes laid by the erstwhile Ramapuram Village Panchayat. There were no instances of water contamination.

Hence, we request water to be supplied through the Panchayat pipes until

CMWSSB identifies the cause of the problem and addresses it.

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

Fourteen years after Ramapuram became a part of GCC, residents received CMWSSB's water for the first time. But we are thoroughly disappointed with the new service as its water is not potable.

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



A cool treat

The animals and birds at Guindy National Park were given a shower to help them cope with the summer. The images were taken on April 21.
PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ B



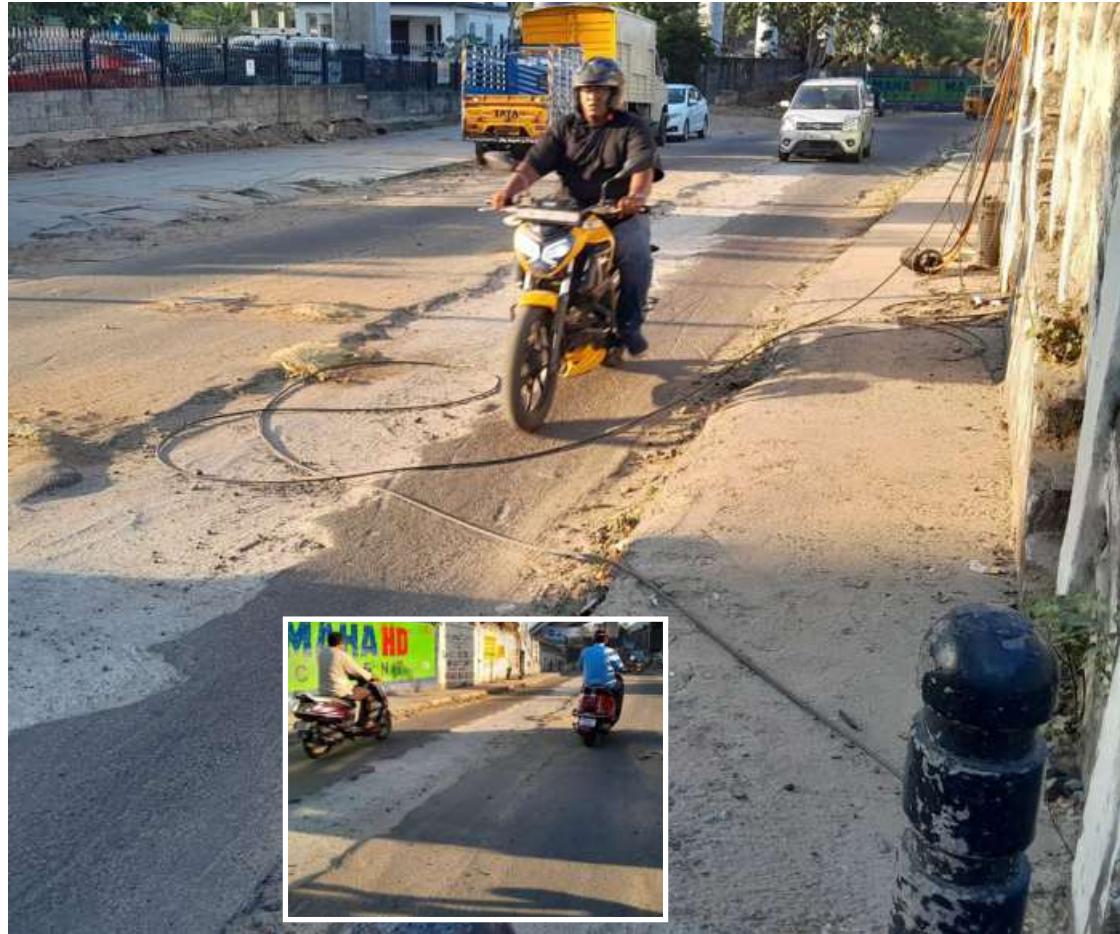
You can be our volunteer-writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues and events in your neighbourhood. You should send the write-ups to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in Letters must carry the postal address and contact number.



STATUS REPORT

Lane near Kalaimagal Nagar waits for mending exercise



The lane under Jhafferkhanpet bridge near Kalaimagal Nagar in Ekkatuthangal is battered. Passers-by point out that it is in this condition for many months now. Vehicles diverted from Nandamakkam on Mount Poonamallee Road also pass through this lane as it leads to

Jawaharlal Nehru Main Road. Further, telecommunication cables lie on the carriageway raising the risk of accidents. The public also drew attention to the footpath with its broken tiles.

The images were taken on April 24



Visual lesson from design professor

SAHANA MIRA S

When assistant professor of Interior design and decor, Karthiga T from JBAS College for Women went out on an early morning ride to Marina beach at the end of last year, to catch the sunrise, what greeted her was a shoreline littered with plastic

waste – bags, large water cans, abandoned slippers, mosquito bats, and other debris tossed ashore.

Deeply disturbed by what she saw, this Velachery resident felt compelled to turn her emotion into action. "This is when I decided to take this issue to a wider audience, but through the language

Karthiga T, who teaches at JBAS College, draws attention to coastal waste through art



Karthiga T. with her mural artwork; and the JBAS team that collected coastal waste.

of art. We need to keep the conversation going, one way or another," says Karthiga. She later incorporated this into her PhD research project after receiving ethical clearance to collect coastal waste and transform it into art, which marked the beginning of her mural art, "Coastal Cry in Plastic".

"While my artwork used only plastic waste, our aim at the end of the day, was to clean the beach. Together with my students from JBAS, we collected all forms of coastal debris from Marina and Besant Nagar beach over a span of 30 days," she explains.

After spending another month sorting through the collected

waste, separating plastics, and sending the rest for recycling, Karthiga began working on her mural artwork from home. Between parenting her toddler and teaching at college, she used whatever spare time she had – often on her terrace to bring the piece alive. The artwork is a statue of a pregnant woman form which has around 20 kilograms of plastic waste.

"I wanted it to be a commentary on environmental degradation," says Karthiga. "The mural work is constructed entirely from coastal waste which we collected where I mainly used plastic bottles, bags, caps, wires, and discarded containers. I wanted viewers to reflect on their

own consumption and disposal habits, and think about the sustainable practises of these discarded items through the mural art," says the interior decor professor, who used eco-friendly paints.

"This pregnant female figure is a metaphor for Mother Earth, carrying the weight of our waste," she adds.

Recently, in April, the mural was installed at the Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai. "The mural now sits in a space surrounded by artists," Ms Karthiga says. "I hope to create conversations and inspire more artists to choose sustainable practices in their work."

One does not associate notebooks and textbooks with World Book Day, but there are students out there who cannot afford to buy them fresh off the shelves. A spotlight on Prakrith Arivagam, a library in New Perungalathur that is scripting a charity on the unused pages of used notebooks



Take a page out of their book

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

On World Book Day (April 23), Sriram Gopalan was desk-bound at his non-profit children's library and thumbing through pages – not pages that flaunted printed words, but empty pages that hoped to host words, handwritten words.

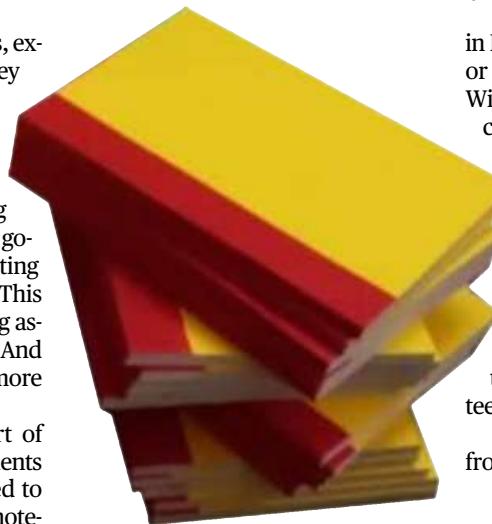
At Prakrith Arivagam, as this library at Alapakkam in New Perungalathur is called, Sriram was swamped by stacks of half-used notebooks. Ruled and unruled, long and short, white and yellowed, smudged and dog-eared notebooks. He was tearing out the untouched pages to settle them between new covers and find them a new pair of hands. Sriram was not labouring at this work alone. The sound of pages being ripped out intact filled the room: he was with people who are on the same page about how half-used notebooks ought to be treated.

They collect used notebooks, extract the blank pages which they would ultimately bind into fresh notebooks: on for weeks now, this activity would extend through May. The epilogue to the exercise: donating the notebooks thus made to government schools and benefitting underprivileged children. This "summer-vacation volunteering assignment" is in its second year. And by the look of it, it has added more pages and chapters.

Last year, with the support of volunteers from the local residents community, the team managed to repurpose and distribute 800 note-



An initiative by Prakrith Arivagam reaches notebooks to students of government schools.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



books to children at a Panchayat Union school at Alapakkam under Nedungundram panchayat in the New Perungalathur region. This year, the bar has been set decisively higher.

"This year, we started collecting in March itself, hoping to reach two or three schools," Sriram says. With over 1000 used notebooks collected already and volunteers

working nearly every day, the distance between the effort and the goalpost is shrinking rapidly.

This annual exercise is promoted in WhatsApp apartment groups, library circles, and social media – to seek half-used notebooks and the volunteers to deal with them.

Responses came from near, far

A word of praise from the PM

Prakrith Arivagam, started on January 1, 2023 by techie Sriram Gopalan after his return from the United States to pitch permanent tent in Chennai, originally had the character of an exclusive children's library.

Its scope was subsequently expanded to include books for all age groups, says Sriram. He however adds that 90 per cent of the books still cater to children. Besides, it focusses on promoting activities that would contribute to the holistic development of children. It therefore essentially remains a children's library and resource centre.

In the 116th edition of Mann Ki Baat (dated November 24, 2024), Prime Minister Narendra Modi showered encomiums on Prakrith Arivagam for how it promotes the reading habit and creativity – through memory-training classes and robotics among others – among children with the use of the latest technology.

He made this reference about Prakrith Arivagam while discussing the lofty goals of children's education and the role played by libraries in achieving them.

and wide, with Mumbai and Mylapore among places where the initiative found resonance.

The project is being powered by more than 20 volunteers this time. "It is a rotational effort," says Sriram. "Even if someone cannot make it every day, a few hours here and there really adds up."

Up to this point, the helping hands belong largely to adults. With educational institutions now closing for summer, college and school students are expected to walk into the volunteering exercise.

Volunteers collect used notebooks, either through drop-offs or home pickups within nearby areas. Sorting the pages is the most labour-intensive: it is about removing used pages, then classifying the clean sheets. "We classify everything – long books, short ones, ruled, unruled. Then we send them to a local binder, who binds them at cost," he explains. "We do not earn from this. The binder we work with has agreed to do it at cost price. We cover the expenses through small fundraisers within our community."

Sriram sums up, defining why they do what they do.

"I think this generation does not realise how much they waste. Schools now provide new books with the fees. Most of them are not even fully used. But there are still thousands of children in government and rural schools who go without basic stationery. That gap is what we are trying to bridge."

To volunteer or to donate old textbooks, call 9445411121

Out for a charge

Have you spotted the latest addition to the landscape: an EV station next to a supermarket or any other major congregating point? Private players and even Greater Chennai Corporation are seeking to establish charging points in locations that can be quickly and comfortably accessed

LIFFY THOMAS

Two years ago when Kiruba Joy brought home a new electric car, he did not anticipate objection from the residents association to having the machine charged from his individual meter. The 300-unit apartment community in Porur had only two EV users then. The association would go on to invest in a common charging point, which did not impress Kiruba as he found the rates to be on the higher side.

"We shifted from our own flat to a rented accommodation in Kolathur to be able to have EV charging at home as well as to enrol my daughter in a nearby school," says Kiruba.

Kiruba would have loved to make use of a public charging station, but he found none within a five kilometre radius.

In the last six months, the EV landscape in Chennai has improved, EV charging infrastructure keeping pace with people's openness to travelling electric.

A changing landscape

Greater Chennai Corporation has started work on identifying locations for public EV charging stations across its 15 zones. Private players are parking EV charging stations near crowd-pulling establishments like malls and cafes.

"Currently, our preference is in establishing two-and-three wheeler charging points as many electric vehicles in these categories have hit the roads in the recent months, and the charging point for such vehicles is not yet universal," says Sriram J, senior manager, charging infrastructure at Bolt.Earth.

The company has 97 public charging stations in Chennai and is in the process of establishing 10 more.

"The recent fleet of Pink Autos and load vehicles launched by the State Government are electric, so the charging infrastructure has to keep pace with the demand," says Sriram.

Plugzmart, a Chennai-based EV charger manufacturer for high-power charging, has 25 charging stations on the highways to help long-distance travellers.

The Union Government has also asked power distribution compa-



An EV charging station established next door to a supermarket on ECR Link Road in Sholinganallur; and (below) near Saidapet station.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

employees working in the IT park as well as those from the public can avail the charging facility inside the campus.

Wiring in

Among the challenges faced by private EV players is finding a good location where electricity load is good.

"EV vehicles need good wiring. In many cases, the wiring component is not suitable and the cost of setting up the wiring runs into lakhs of rupees. The 'load fixed deposit' that has to be paid to the government is also high," says Sriram.

The process of engaging with the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board is also time-consuming. "We are seeing a lot of improvement on the ground. Now we have an EV cell where concerns raised by us are being looked into.

TNEB has also asked its senior staff to give preference to EV users," says Sriram adding that a meeting of charge point operators was held on April 24.

nies to set up common charging stations every 25 km along national highways.

According to Bureau of Energy Efficiency, as on April 12 2025, Tamil Nadu has 1,524 public charging stations installed over the last five years, with Chennai accounting for 218 (tier 2 cities have 459 and tier 3 has 847). Karnataka and Maharashtra are way ahead of Tamil Nadu.

EV users note that besides addressing charging infrastructure gaps in public places, signages have to be put up to improve the visibility of charging stations.

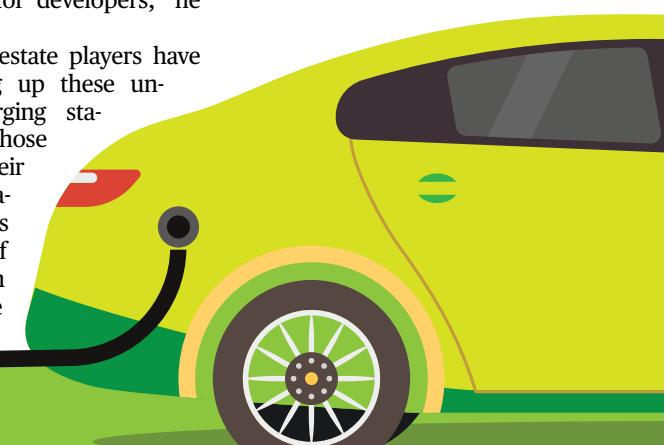
Vignesh N. works as a delivery partner and commutes more than 100 km on his e-bike from his home in Ambattur Industrial Estate to Parrys. He says the city needs not just more charging stations but the existing ones need to be better maintained and be made user-friendly. "You reach a charging point to realise it's not working or there are a queue of people waiting

for their turn or the filter option in the app is such that it directs you to a gated community where you are not allowed," says Vignesh.

Exclusive charging points for gated communities is also in the wish list.

Ragavendra Ravichandran, co-founder and COO, Plugzmart, says the focus is more on getting developers of new projects on board than persuading an existing apartment community to invest in an EV station. "Having an EV charging infrastructure is now an essential selling point for developers," he says.

Some real estate players have been opening up these unmanned charging stations for those beyond their community. Ragavendra cites the example of SKCL Prime in Guindy where



At the end of every wintering season, one can have only a broad idea about where a migratory bird would breed, unless it is tagged. The latest illustration of how bird tagging helps conservation efforts comes from Kelambakkam backwaters on the southern rim of Chennai



On the tail of a tagged Curlew sandpiper

PRINCE FREDERICK

When a wintering bird doubles back to its breeding grounds to attend to the visceral business of procreation, it becomes essentially "unreachable" for the human friends it has made in its wintering grounds. It is impossible to keep tabs on the bird. One only knows its vast breeding range, which could straddle countries. Trying to

trace this bird down to its "hearth" would amount to looking for a needle in a haystack.

Birder Jithesh Babu is rummaging through a haystack: he is trying to trace the soon-to-be address of a curlew sandpiper (he made friends with, on April 18, 2025 at Kelambakkam backwaters). Jithesh would likely succeed in this effort. The Curlew sandpiper (already wearing its breeding plumage and likely to be around in its wintering

grounds for some more time) is wearing a tag.

A bird with a tag usually has a recorded history to fall back on. It is a matter of time before Jithesh knows where exactly the Curlew sandpiper would go. The tagged Curlew sandpiper having crossed his 150-600 mm telephoto lens, he has a photo of the creature, which he has sent to Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) along with a request for information about it.



A Curlew sandpiper with a tag at Kelambakkam on April 18, 2025; a tagged Greater flamingo at Pallikaranai marshland on April 21, 2021.
PHOTOS: JITHESH BABU

And Jithesh knows what exactly to expect.

Around the same time four years ago – April 21, 2021 – he found a tagged Greater flamingo at Pallikaranai marshland and he wrote to BNHS seeking information, and in response, Tuhina Katti, a scientist with the Wetlands Programme, BNHS, wrote back to him: "From the combination on the tag, it appears to be 'AAP'. This individual was tagged in Panje, Navi

Mumbai (on the outskirts of Mumbai) on 24 September 2018. It was resighted in Chennai in August 2020 and since then it has been resighted in Sholinganallur on a couple more occasions. It is interesting that the bird was still present there in April."

Jithesh remarks: "As this happened at the height of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the response took some time. Usually, it is prompt."



Different stages of domesticity

▼
Two pheasant-tailed jacanas, one in full and the other in partial breeding plumage, at a boggy patch on Nookampalayam Link Road in Semmancherry on April 22, 2025; and at same patch, a moorhen was seen feeding its young, on April 26.
PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

EVENTS

Postcrossing meetup today at Nageswara Rao Park

Event to celebrate Samuel Morse's birth anniversary



A postcrossing meetup at Nageswara Rao Park in the past.

Postcard enthusiasts are invited to a special Postcrossing meetup to celebrate the birth anniversary of Samuel Morse, the inventor of Morse Code. The event will take place on April 27; 4 p.m. at Nageswara Rao Park in Mylapore.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about Morse Code and its significance in communication history, while also enjoying the camaraderie of the Postcrossing community.

Postcrossers will also come together to exchange postcards and

make new friends. Postcrossing is a global project that allows members to send and receive postcards from all over the world. It connects people from different cultures and backgrounds through the simple act of sending and receiving postcards, said a release.

Interested participants can register for the meetup through the following link: <https://forms.gle/wzM5vK2CF5u7CVeG6>

For more information, contact Mouli Priya PC at +91 8148566110.

Summer camp to develop inter-generational bonding

Dementia Care Foundation, a non-profit organisation in OMR, is organising a free summer camp from May 5 to 9 (9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.) bringing together children and elders living with dementia for a meaningful and inclusive experience.

According to the release, India currently has over 8.8 million people living with dementia. With rising life expectancy and age being the biggest risk factor, this number is expected to increase by 20 percent by 2050. This unique initiative aims to foster empathy, inter-generational bonding, and awareness about dementia among young minds and the community at large, said the release.

The camp will feature a wide variety of activities designed to engage both children and elders with dementia: yoga, kарате, storytelling, music and dance, kolam drawing, flower garland making, arts and crafts, fireless cooking, sewing, and traditional games like *Paramapadam*, *Pallanguzhi*, *Goli*, and *Adu Puli Aatam*, along with laughter therapy. The event will conclude with a valedictory celebration, where children will showcase performances, reflect on their experiences, and create lasting memories with the elders.

For details, call 9344257901 / 044 24964555.



Saplings planted at Mangal Eri Park

In commemoration of Earth Day, Lions Club of South Madras and Exnora International conducting a tree planting drive at Mangal Eri Park in Mogappair. Around 200 saplings were planted.

M. B. Nirmal founder of Exnora International, journalist 'Nakkheeran' Gopal and members of Lions Club of South Madras took part in the drive.

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All-women carnival conducted

Golden Sparrow, an all-women carnival organised by Rotary District 3233, was held recently at St.Thomas College in Koyambedu. The carnival was inaugurated by mayor of Greater Chennai Corporation Priya Rajan.

The all-women carnival is organised by Rotary to strengthen women, nurture, lead and transform communities, said a release.

Eminent dignitaries and women achievers received awards during the event. Parveen Sultana, motivational speaker; Greater Chennai Corporation Mayor Priya Rajan; V.Vanitha IPS (retd) received Golden Sparrow Women Achiever Award. Representation of women members in Rotary is 16.20 per cent in South Asia and Chennai District 3233 is 18.25 per cent, added the release.

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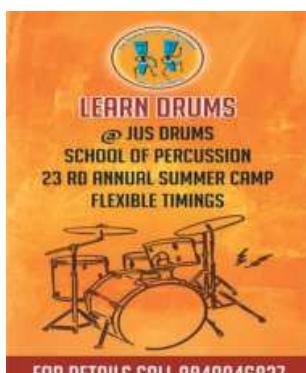
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Soaring over the din: a work in progress



In geometric terms, it is a simple curve. In engineering terms, a massive structural work. In experiential terms, it promises users a 'high', one enabling them to soar over the din of traffic as they take in the sights of Tholkappia Poonga.

The Tholkappia Poonga is under renovation and the experience of traipsing down the skywalk, connecting Phase I and Phase II of the eco-park, has to wait for some time even after it is constructed. By the look of it, the construction of the skywalk would be wrapped

up soon. It is already drawing attention with motorists gawking at the structure sail over the head. The elevation planted at the junction of DGS Dinakaran Salai, Santhome High Road and South Canal Bank Road is distinctive.

According to those connected with the work, the skywalk construction has been set an early deadline, around mid-May. Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust is steering the Tholkappia Poonga restoration. The images were taken on April 25, 2025

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



Workshop on mushroom cultivation

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on mushroom cultivation on April 30.

The session will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required. For details, call 044 - 29530048.



Waste collection drive in Kotturpuram

Clover by the River Apartments, a gated-community in Kotturpuram, conducted a dry waste collection drive recently. According to a press release, it is a bi-annual event conducted in collaboration

with Wasted 360 Solutions.

During the drive, gently-used clothes, toys, and footwear were collected. Also, there was a workshop on mending clothes so that they could be reused. In previous



the message of sustainable practices, adds the press release.

Also, buttermilk is distributed to the housekeeping staff and security at the gated community. Each day, a resident sponsors the two-month-long initiative during summer, says the release.

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