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### 'Thalambur roads cleaned'

**SHINOJ G.K**

Following the article titled 'Poor upkeep of road in front of our community in Thalambur' published on May 11, 2025, in the IT Corridor edition of the *The Hindu* Downtown, the Thalambur Panchayat cleaned the roads near DLF Garden City in Semmancherry on May 12.

**Shinoj G.K** is a resident of Thalambur



### READERS WRITE

#### 'Key road in Siruseri IT Park is battered'

**L. VIJAYADURAI**

Third Cross Road at Siruseri IT Park, one of main approach roads to IT Park and therefore bustling most of time, is in a sorry state. Having been dug up often but not relaid properly, the road, close to two kilometres long, is battered and uneven.

As a result, the road often has a cloud of dust drifting over it. The pavements are either broken or non-existent. Besides, construction debris occupies the road margins. Pedestrians therefore end up walking in the middle of the road. Further, there are no street lights. This is the state of the road for the past two years.

**L. Vijayadurai** is a resident of Siruseri

▼  
Third Cross Road at Siruseri IT Park on May 15, 2025. PHOTOS: L. VIJAYADURAI



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# A new chapter for OMR couple

These two Thoraipakkam residents have relaunched Bookshelf, an online book lending library functioning from their home

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**A** small library near her house in Thrissur was Sudha Gopalakrishnan's steadfast companion during the years she was in school. Though the library offered limited books, it is here she got introduced to *Enid Blyton's Famous Five*. Since then books have also served her creative pursuits as a web designer to face the corporate world more confidently.

In December 2019, in collaboration with her husband H. Venkataraman, they launched an online lending library, Bookshelf, converting a room in their house in Thoraipakkam to stock a humble collection of children's books.

But things did not go as planned. Their entrepreneurial dreams received a big blow with COVID-19. "In three months we had to take a pause as social distancing became the norm and some of our members feared placing a request for books," recalls Sudha.

With the pandemic showing no signs of letting up, Bookshelf went into a long hibernation, the couple



had to be content just focussing on their respective corporate jobs. Later, in January 2025, they officially relaunched Bookshelf.

In the model, one places an order and the books are delivered at their doorsteps. "We were clear from the beginning that we will be hyperlocal but cover as many readers as we can. Currently, we cater to areas on OMR, starting from Perungudi to Kelambakkam," says Sudha, a freelance web designer.

The couple say their research showed that many libraries folded up due to infrastructure cost, so instead of investing in a physical space their flat in Bhaggyam Urbanville in Thoraipakkam doubles as library.

It currently stocks more than 2,000 books for children up to the age of 12 years. "We have books by



Indian authors and publishers, multi-language books and those apt for children," says Sudha that their teenage daughter feeds them with inputs. Venkat, who is a finance consultant, contributes his mite by helping with marketing and promotions.

Bookshelf has not come up with any rigid rules on returning books as their primary objective is to get children to pick them up first.

They will soon be trying out a new concept: a mini-library heading to an apartment or gated community. "This will be like a travelling library, where we bring books,

storytellers and do activities for two to three hours. Depending on the interest from the community, the frequency of the visits will be increased," says Sudha.

Bookshelf currently has 60 members and is counting.

"It is a slow journey and we are not looking at it as a profitable business, just the satisfaction of seeing families take to reading. Sustaining initiatives such as this will keep us motivated and energised," says Sudha, grateful to the encouragement they have been getting from the Federation of OMR Residents Associations (FOMRRA).

Sudha Gopalakrishnan and H. Venkataraman at their library

Their request to gated communities is to not be indifferent to ventures that are trying to keep the reading habit alive in this digital age. Bookshelf is organising its first event 'OMR Storytelling Festival' where the sessions feature elements of music, crafts-making, dance and drama. For details, visit <https://bookshelf-library.com>

## OMR Storytelling Festival 2025 concludes today

The Bookshelf, an online library for children, is organising "OMR Storytelling Festival 2025" on May 17 and 18 at Kriyates, Thoraipakkam from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. On Sunday, storytellers Pretigaya Haran, and Alvin and Kishore will engage participants with their themes "Around the World in 60 minutes, A Playful World of Kid Powered Theatre" and "Musical Storytelling, Where Words Meet Music" respectively. Registration is a must. Residents of OMR can avail special free passes.

For details, visit <https://bit.ly/OSF2025>. Or call 8056073602

### PRINCE FREDERICK

**R**ecreating the world in their own image is an irresistible temptation for human kind. Imparting human characteristics to animals is a subset of this inclination. Considering its usefulness in elucidating moral instructions (recall "Aesop's Fables"), this usually turns out to be the best temptation that human kind ever yielded to. There is however a yawning chasm, wider than Australia's Cataract Valley, between fable-ism and anthropomorphism.

Fable-ism does not for a second pretend that the animal-characters possess any of the human characteristics they portray in the fables. Anthropomorphism is a wholly different kettle of fish: it might compare human and animal behaviours, suggesting the species in question mirrors a specific human trait. For example, the male jacana attending to child-rearing duties can be presented as a mirror image of men exemplifying fatherly commitment.

The human mind can create points of convergence in this manner, and here is one more born out of an entirely anthropomorphic viewpoint. The belligerence and re-



▼ A nesting Black winged stilt flying into a rage at the sight of intrusive steps, in Thaiyur near Kelambakkam; and (right) a Black winged stilt pair at their nesting site in Perumbakkam wetland. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



## The 'angry' Black winged stilt

From April to August, when these long-legged birds nest and breed, it is difficult not to resort to anthropomorphism while making sense of their behaviours related to defending their nests and young ones

silence of the Black winged stilt as a "householder". And why is this example of anthropomorphism massively irresistible? Because it mirrors the extent human parents – at least, a majority of them – would go to protect the little home they create and raise.

At the end of the wintering season, when Perumbakkam wetland dries up, images of belligerent Black winged stilts guarding the stones they had marked for nesting are inevitable. Never mind that their response to the danger (usually more of a perception than a reality)

would be disproportionate to the threat.

These stones are a boon to the Black winged stilt, and around April, they are prompt in taking possession of them, as these images from Perumbakkam wetland on April 10 and 13, 2025 as also the one

from Thaiyur near Kelambakkam taken on April 29, 2025 illustrate. The black-winged stilts' breeding season falls in the April to August time band.

Where they do not find stones such as these parked in shallow waters, nesting Black winged stilts – both male and female working shoulder to shoulder (pectoral girdle to pectoral girdle, to be more accurate) – would create mounds by shovelling earth and even decaying plant material to make their nests.

Equally inevitably, showers, some out-of-season and the others according to the dictates of the rain chart (usually those from South West monsoon), might submerge these stones, dashing these birds' efforts to raise a family. This year, the downpour on April 16 set the Black winged stilts' plans back a wee bit, and in characteristic style, they resumed nesting effort after the water receded again.

Time and again, one has seen this scene play out. After the water drains and the stones re-emerge, they would be at it again, making another attempt at nesting. In these times, this beanpole of a bird is the picture of resilience, illustrating the power of stick-to-itiveness.



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Snapshots of the two weddings.  
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

**A** green wedding is not different from a regular wedding; it does the regular things differently. The idioms of the ritual continue but in rephrased forms. Here is how Amrutha Pragasam ensured hers read different and green.

Souvenirs to attendees: jute bags free of wording to enable their reuse.

Invitations: handmade invites on recycled waste paper, done by Amrutha from the scratch.

Bridal attire: no fast fashion; a sari bought directly from the weaver to benefit them; jewellery, some rented and some borrowed.

The rest of the green wedding read: no flexes, foam boards, plastic flowers or bottled water; a bouquet made from waste scrap; steel cups; bagasse plates.

Amrutha's wedding was going to be green by default. Sustainability-minded, Amrutha had thought of such a wedding for herself long before "green weddings" became trendy hashtags. A fashion designer currently pursuing a PhD on sustainable fashion from National Institute of Fashion Technology, she runs a non-profit, Rhapsodeed that sells second hand items, sustainably made, and handmade lifestyle products. With the profits and fundraisers, Rhapsodeed gives a leg-up to the unprivileged to start small ventures of their own.

Amrutha had a vision of an eco-friendly wedding, but had to successfully impress that mental picture upon those travelling alongside her – her family, her fiance and his own – so they owned that vision too, at least respected it.

She received a nod, a whole-hearted one, from Ashwin Pratap, then fiance now husband.

"His values just naturally synced with mine. I did not have to convince him." The convincing part entered the equation when the families were in the picture.

"Initially, they thought it was unne-



## Green beginnings

While tying the knot, they loosened a burden weighing on the planet. In the light of World Family Day (May 15), let us invite ourselves, retrospectively, to two weddings in Chennai that in recent times achieved online virality for their minimal-waste underpinnings. In both weddings, the bride called the green shots

cessary, but they came around eventually."

In the early days of wedding preparation, when the nod was yet to come forth, she hand-crafted the invites with waste paper, at home, hidden from sceptical eyes. "I sat for a whole week, crafting them one by one. My

products had to be moved into another room so I could work in secret."

And the two families found themselves being congratulatory about Amrutha's efforts.

There was however a challenge and it came from an unexpected quarter: given the logistical difficulties, the marriage hall management panicked, and it took a whisper of reassurance from Namma Ooru Foundation, which handled the organic waste, to bring them back on board.

**A takeaway:** in Amrutha's words, "It is funny – even when you reduce décor, the prices do not drop. You have to negotiate every detail." It might cost more, but is worth it, as it would cost the planet a little less.

### 'Better late than landfill'

Uma Ram picked up the green baton late in the day, but ran her feet off to complete the run on time and with impact. Only the day before the reception did she manage to sign a service provider on –

Connect To Bhoomi (an organisation focused on promoting and practising sustainability by educating clients on the responsible use of natural resources) – that could deal with the waste generated from the wedding.

"But better late than landfill," quips Uma, a digital

content creator.

Waste management: Water bottles had already been ordered, and the caterers were asked to work with Connect To Bhoomi to ensure their proper disposal. Banana leaves replaced plates; leftover fruits were fed to cows after a vet's approval; and flowers were composted carefully. "Not all flowers are eco-friendly – some are dyed and can harm the soil. It was a real eye-opener," she admits.

Invitation: seed-paper invites came from Iniyawai.

Bridal attire: Uma chose to wear her grandmother's 50-year-old sari instead of buying new. "Why buy new when heritage fits like a glove?" Uma asks. Truth be told, her first choice was a 90-year-old silver Banarasi sari; as it could not be restored, she went in for the less-aged alternative.

Transportation: two buses booked to bring relatives together. "Less carbon footprint, more family footprint," she smiles.

If Uma had had her way in the first place, the process could have been easier than it was.

"Ever since college, I have noticed how weddings waste so much – especially water and food. It always left a bad taste," she says.

Uma's dream was a no-frills wedding at a quiet temple or at the marriage regis-

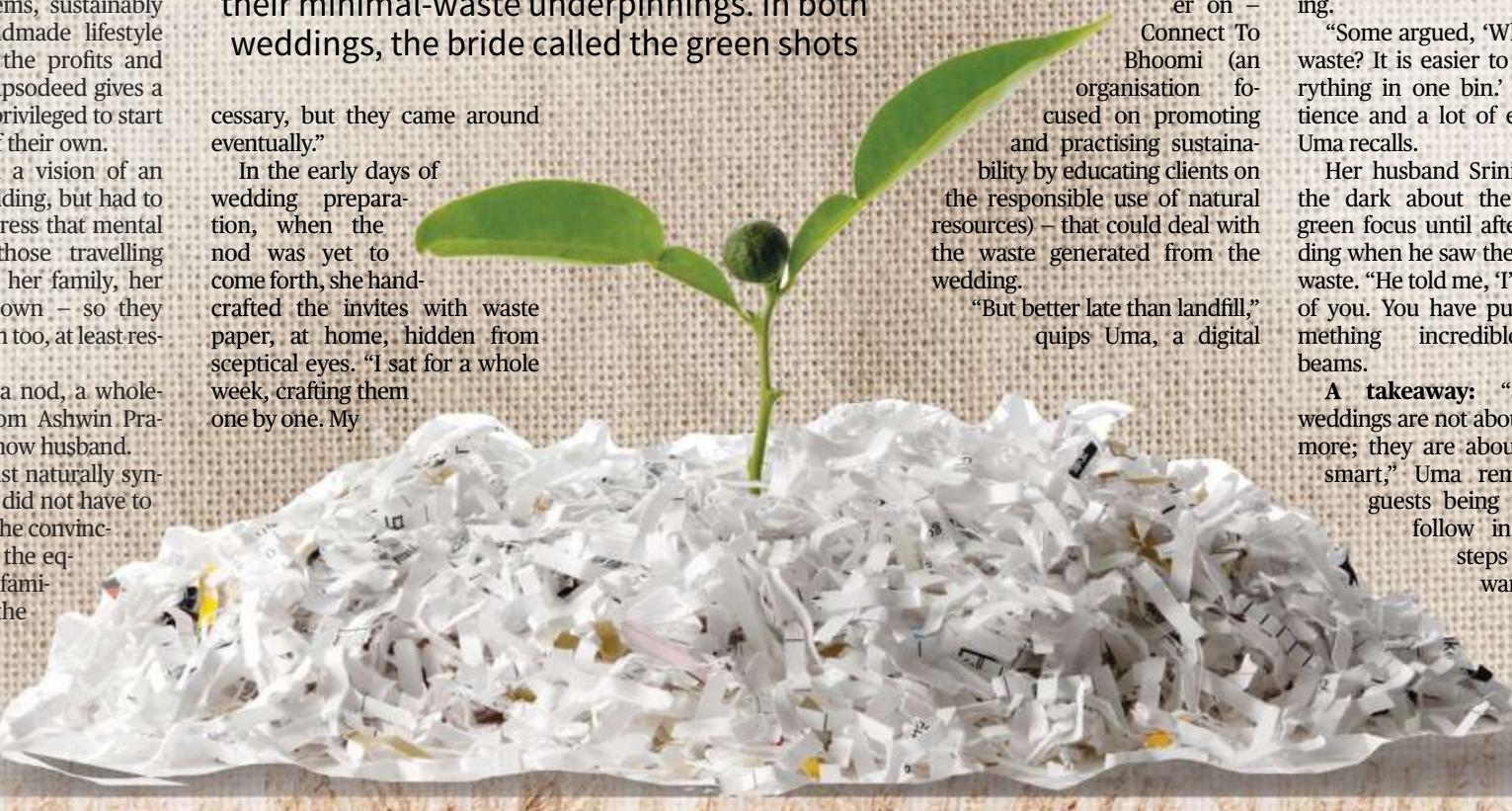
trar's office. But, the bride and the groom being firstborns, both families wanted a grand wedding.

Persuading vendors and the staff at the marriage hall to toe the sustainability line took some doing.

"Some argued, 'Why separate waste? It is easier to throw everything in one bin.' It took patience and a lot of explaining," Uma recalls.

Her husband Srinivas was in the dark about the wedding's green focus until after the wedding when he saw the segregated waste. "He told me, 'I'm so proud of you. You have pulled off something incredible,'" Uma beams.

**A takeaway:** "Sustainable weddings are not about spending more; they are about spending smart," Uma remarks. And guests being inspired to follow in her footsteps is the reward.



# A bitter pill

**Those who cannot head to the hills and escape Chennai's punishing summer will have to take a slew of precautionary measures which include greater attention to the medicine cabinet, say city doctors**



LIFFY THOMAS

**M**aria Aruna notes this summer has been extremely cruel to her 87-year-old father, disrupting his routine. His typical day involves being picked up from his home in Mylapore around 9 a.m. in a van, which makes multiple stops to board other seniors *en route* to Dignity Foundation's Dementia Day Care Centre in Anna Nagar.

The summer heat is adding to the discomfort of a long commute and taking a toll on this octogenarian with dementia. "Dad had loose stools, so I did not send him to the day care centre for a week; I fear the heat and the travel would drain him further," says the school teacher, who also had a tele-consultation with the doctor.

High temperature can impact seniors (or anybody else) in another critical manner. Doctors point out high temperature and humidity can affect the efficacy of medicines.

Venkatarman Karthikeayan, senior consultant neurologist with Kauvery Group of Hospitals, feels that those with multiple sclerosis are the most affected by summer heat.

"When I was running my clinic in Liverpool, the Brits would leave for Scandinavian countries during summer. They could not tolerate the heat. There would be 'reproduction' of all their symptoms. It is not a relapse but we term it as pseudo-relapse because of the heat around. The affected neurons will not be able to compensate when the heat is high. This is particularly a problem for those diagnosed

with multiple sclerosis living in cities where humidity is high," says Dr. Karthikeayan.

As heat-related fatigue can be hard on seniors, particularly those with such ailments, Dr. Karthikeayan has a word of advice for them: he asks them to "reserve their energy for the most important and productive work".

For example, watching television does not equate with resting. "People think brain becomes tired only while working but brain becomes super tired more with cognitive work than physical work. So I would ask them to cut down on such activities and take a quick nap," he says.

**Medicines and dehydration**  
Sridhar Vaitheswaran, consultant psychiatrist, Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), says some medication can amplify the risk related to heat and summer – dehydration.

"While some medicines can make our body deal with dehydration, there are some others that can exacerbate the condition. There are a few medicines that can increase sweating as well. Some of the medicines used for high blood pressure and heart disease would also make the body lose water. It is important that the patient and the caregiver are aware of these problems and the medicines that can cause them; the physician needs to explain these things to them," says Dr. Vaitheswaran.

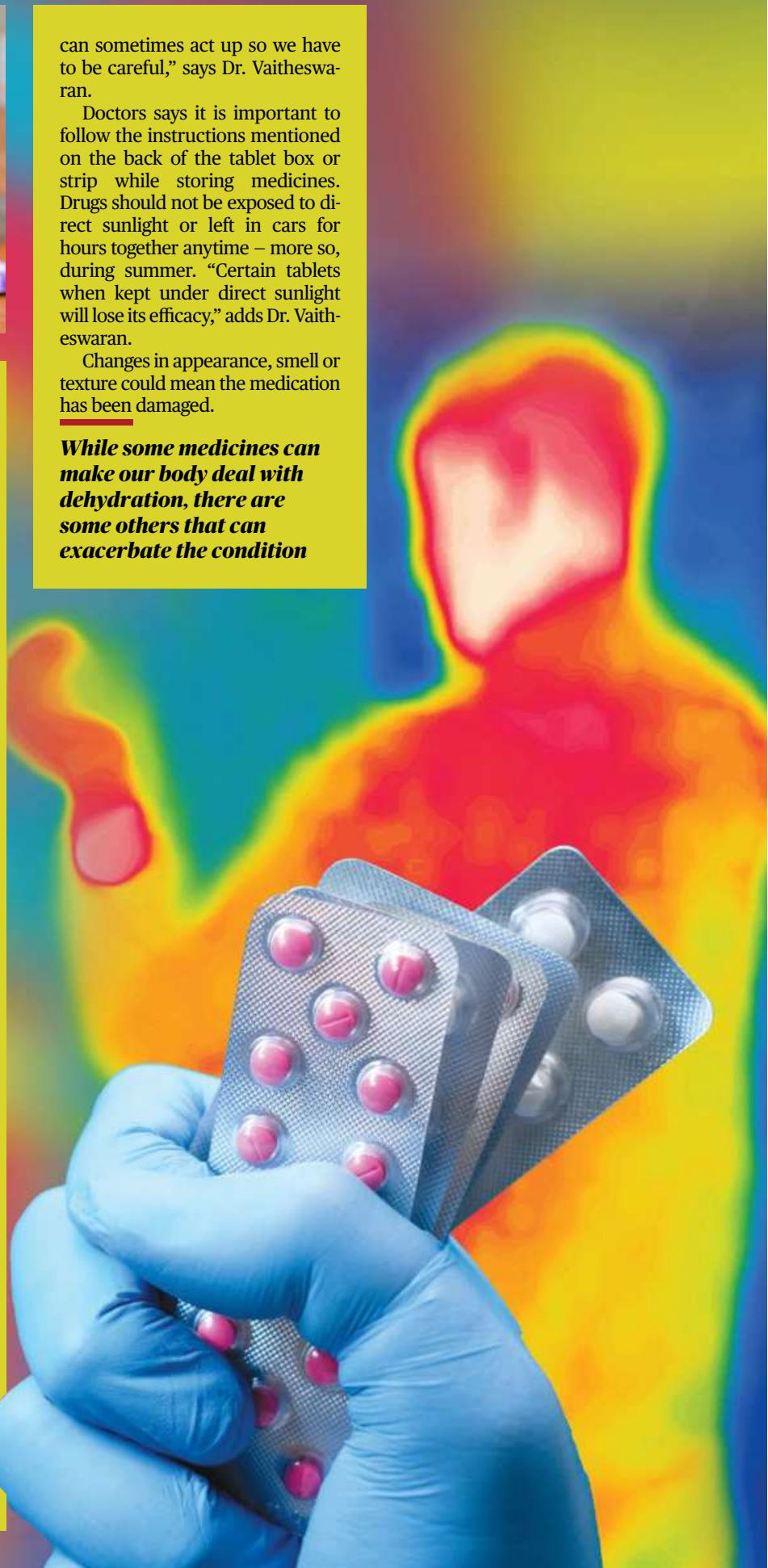
"The dosage of some of the medicines might have to be changed depending on the timing of the dose and how it causes those problems. Some medicines such as Lithium, which we prescribe for bi-polar disorder,

can sometimes act up so we have to be careful," says Dr. Vaitheswaran.

Doctors say it is important to follow the instructions mentioned on the back of the tablet box or strip while storing medicines. Drugs should not be exposed to direct sunlight or left in cars for hours together anytime – more so, during summer. "Certain tablets when kept under direct sunlight will lose its efficacy," adds Dr. Vaitheswaran.

Changes in appearance, smell or texture could mean the medication has been damaged.

**While some medicines can make our body deal with dehydration, there are some others that can exacerbate the condition**



# EVENTS



## Survey on postal services needed

N.S. VENKATARAMAN

With digital communication becoming the order of the day, both at personal and professional levels, and private courier services becoming extensive in their reach, the demand for traditional services from postal department has waned in recent times. This is a well-known fact.

However, individuals and organisations continue to depend on the postal department for ordinary posts / letters.

Against this backdrop, a detailed study on whether the services rendered by postal department for ordinary posts including delivery of letters, magazines and booklets, follow high standard or whether the services have slackened in recent times, causing delay in delivery of

ordinary letters.

At this juncture, it is important to carry out the study to maintain the reputation of the postal department. There appears to be a view that with no accountability for delivery of ordinary postal letters, the public satisfaction may have suffered a little in recent times.

Perhaps, to start with, surveys of this kind can be carried out for post offices located in Adyar, Thiruvanmiyur, Indira Nagar and Besant Nagar.

Based on the results of this study, more extensive studies can be launched later on. I hope the postal department would realise that this is a matter of utmost importance.

(N.S.Venkataraman is a resident of Besant Nagar)

## WhatsApp ticketing offered by CMRL



Chennai Metro Rail Limited has introduced WhatsApp ticketing. Commuters can now purchase tickets through WhatsApp using the WhatsApp chatbot 8300086000. Other online ticketing options, including StaticQR Code, CMRL mobile app, Paytm, and PhonePe, are also available. Commuters can buy tickets at counters and using the Singara Chennai Card and Travel Card.

## Awareness programme on hypertension today

World Hypertension League and Tamil Nadu State Chapter of the Indian Society of Hypertension are conducting a public awareness programme on 'High Blood Pressure' on May 18.

A free screening for high blood pressure and fasting blood glucose will be held from 7.30 to 9.30 a.m., followed by public interaction from 10 a.m. on 'Hypertension with a focus on activities of the World Hypertension League'.

The programme will be held at Chettinad Vidyashram auditorium, Kumararaja Muthiah Hall, MRC Nagar.

The public are requested to enter the auditorium through gate number 5.

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## Value education programme for children

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has launched a weekly value education programme for children and teens. It is designed to nurture spiritual and moral values in young minds through fun-filled sessions. Participants also benefit from improved concentration and memory power, said a release.

The programme (En-

glish and Tamil) will be conducted at multiple locations in Chennai as well as can be attended virtually.

Children (ages 6-12) will learn through stories, quizzes, shlokas, bhajans, fireless cooking, art and craft. Teens will be engaged in stimulating theme-based stories, debates, group discussions, mind mapping, and JAM

(Just A Minute) sessions. Course materials, including videos, PDFs, and presentations, will be delivered via Google Classroom. Upon successful completion, all participants will be awarded a certificate, added the release.

For registration, visit [www.iskconchennai.org/bpss](http://www.iskconchennai.org/bpss). Or call 8072599295.



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### 'Tansi Nagar, a dumping spot for scrap items'

Parts of Tansi Nagar near Perungudi MRTS railway station and near Kamber Street have become a dumping spot for scrap materials and all other kinds of waste.

*Shankar,  
Velachery*



### Telugu classes from June 7

World Telugu Federation is conducting Telugu classes from June 7 at Ankur plaza, T. Nagar. According to a press release, no fee will be charged. For details, call 9841616465 / 7305557322.

### Culinary workshops on May 22 and 23



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a culinary workshop on May 22 and 23. The session on May 23 focuses on preparation of flavour powders that could be added in vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisines. And preparation of sweets and savouries will be demonstrated on May 23. The workshops will be held at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For details, call 044 - 29530048

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