

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



GREEN BEGINNINGS

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 **P4&5**



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 **P6**



Haddows Road: cable drums versus pedestrians

In the best of times, with cable drums occupying the pavement, this section of Haddows Road in Nungambakkam was never a pin-up for walkability, as illustrated by the image (right) taken on April 30, 2025. Ironically, this section sports a board that points out that "pavements are for pedestrians only".

With pipeline work being undertaken on this section, pedestrian comfort has plummeted to an abysmal low, as the image from May 14, 2025 shows.

Haddows Road is a one-way and known for fast-moving traffic; even the pedestrian signal installed near Shastri Bhavan does not act as a speed regulator for the

vehicular traffic most of the time.

And in sections such as this one, pedestrians are out on a limb, while crossing the road and even while walking down the road, as obstructions such as this cause them to step on to the carriageway.

Pavement relaying work is under way at Haddows Road. *Photos: Prince Frederick*

'RWA seeks park in Ambal Nagar'



Greater Chennai Corporation has sought the development of a park on the parcel of land at Ambal Nagar in Ramapuram which belongs to the Tamil Nadu government. The place is being misused for dump waste; and private vehicles are

parked there. The land should be put to better use.

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

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08:30 am 18th May 2025

Park in Iypanthangal in a state of neglect



The images were taken on May 14, 2025.

Iypanthangal Village Panchayat-run park in Ramachandra Nagar lacks regular maintenance. Residents of the locality use the park despite it being squalid uninviting.

The place is strewn with plastic covers and bottles and all other kinds of waste. Besides, leaf litter and dense growth of shrubs and weeds provide a conducive environment for reptiles. Visitors say

they have spotted scorpions and snakes at the park. Most of the play equipment are broken and not in a state of use. The same goes for benches. Visitors find the number of lights at the park inadequate.



The park is below the level of the road and hence prone to inundation. It takes days for the water to recede, say visitors.

"The park was opened in 2010. It was well maintained by the residents of Ramachandra Nagar in the initial years. But gradually it fell into a state of neglect. Mainly because those residents who took keen interest in the upkeep of the park have moved elsewhere and some are no more. At present, there is nobody to take up the cause of the park. There are no security guards and the park is kept open all the time. Hence, the place is misused to consume alcohol during night. I have made complaints to the Panchayat officials but to no avail," says long-time resident of Ramachandra Nagar and a regular at the park R Mahalakshmi.

Text by L. Kanthimathi

READERS WRITE

'Road safety rules thrown to the wind'



Eyes not on the road. Motorists attending to phone calls and messages while on the move have become a common sight today. The images were taken on May 15, 2025. PHOTOS: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Road safety has become a matter of grave concern. Safety rules have been thrown to the wind. Motorists are 'running amuck.' The need of the hour is to spread awareness. People need to be educated about the importance of complying with rules. Traffic police with the support of corporate companies including automobile manufacturers and media houses should carry out vigorous awareness campaigns such as quiz and other competitions to drive home the message.

K.R. Subramanian,
Saidapet



Workers honoured

Federation of Residential Welfare Associations, West Jhafferkhanpet, presented clothes and sweet boxes to workers of the Greater Chennai Corporation, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board, and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation, as part of May Day celebration.

"In recognition of the service we

honoured 11 workers. Among them, two were security guards of two different apartments. Besides, these two security guards were provided financial assistance in amounts of ₹5,000 and ₹2,000 – one on account of his health and the other in recognition of his work. We also honoured the post man of our neighbourhood," says Federation secretary P. Sudhakar.

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.

A new work space and a sense of dignity

Non-profit Yein Udaan's facility seeks to "elevate" the work of its staff, many of them hailing from an underprivileged background. The walls sport hand-painted artworks that celebrate Chetpet where the NGO's work is rooted

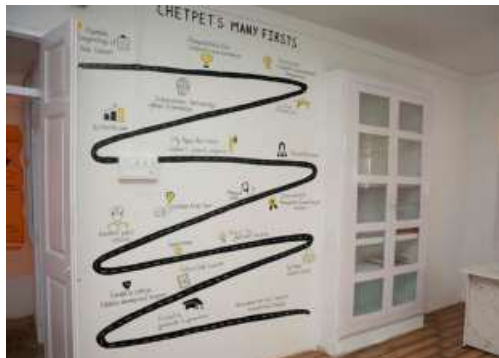
BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Yein Udaan's has just opened its account in terms of its office space; that should strike anyone familiar with Yein Udaan's work, but unaware of its workaday realities, as hugely surprising. The non-profit which works with underprivileged children in Chetpet, providing them with a structured after-class learning programme, is eight years old.

In all these years, the staff – teaching, administrative and housekeeping – have been operating from a borrowed space, space "borrowed" from the children they are serving.

The classrooms at the after-school facility would double as office spaces.

Says Vedika Agarwal, founder of Yein Udaan: "This is our first office actually in eight years. Until now, our team was sharing classroom space with the children as we were investing all donations into the programmes. However, now as our team has grown to 28 members-strong, we needed a dedicated space for us to convene, plan, focus and work. Our presence had also begun disturbing the students. Thus we made



Handpainted artworks at the facility.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Carrying a degree of swankiness and creativity, the new office space is impressing visitors, and staff even more.

Vedika explains: "We are immensely proud of this as we look at it not only as an achievement of establishing a strong organisation with a stable team but also because the space is curated as one aimed at the empowerment for our all-women team. Of 28 of us, 24 are from the low income community in Chetpet that

the decision to move to a dedicated office workspace."

The walls at the office sport hand-painted artworks (done by findart team) that provide a peek into the processes and the philo-

sophy driving the work at Yein Udaan.

"The artwork curated around the office is a commemoration of Chetpet, its people and history," notes Vedika.

we serve, thus for them to have an office to call their own – one in which they are not maids but formal workforce, is truly a milestone.

She adds: "It is located in Chetpet only for ease of access for the team & relevance – to be rooted where we have our impact."

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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 re-use.

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.



to come forth, she handcrafted 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

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

Green beginnings



Snapshots of the two weddings.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



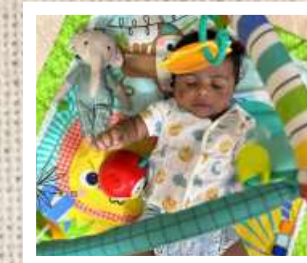
content creator. Waste management: Water bottles had already been ordered, and the caterers were asked to work with Connect To Bhoomi to ensure their proper disposal. Banana leaves replaced plates; leftover fruits were fed to cows after a vet's approval; and flowers were composted carefully. "Not all 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 registrar's office. But, the bride and the groom being first-borns, 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.



From the green baby shower; and (right) Dev.



Witnessing sustainability from the cradle

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Dev Chigurupati Prince is 1.5 years old or thereabouts. With some more passage of time, when he is old enough to demand bedtime stories, his mother Chigurupati Anjani would indulge him with one rare bedtime story, a story that has not emerged from a fertile pen, is real and continues to be lived, with many sequels to follow.

It is a story where none other than little Dev himself "plays" the central role. This story in fact began before Dev was born and it featured him even then.

When Anjani was carrying Dev, she had a green baby shower on October 15, 2023, organised at St. Mark's Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Chromepet.

Ever since he was born, Dev has taken pitter-patter steps across a sustainability landscape, travelling alongside his mother and father, Blessing Samuel Prince.

"The swing that he used for four months is a hand-me-down," says Anjani.

For the first one year since Dev's birth, the parents celebrated a monthly milestone, planting at least one tree on the day he would turn a month older. The diaper being used is a Super Bottom cloth diaper. The sight of used diapers on roads disturbs Anjani. One of her early decisions for Dev was to avoid disposable diapers. "We see diapers scattered on roads, sometimes torn apart by stray dogs. I did not want to be part of that. It became a priority not to contribute to that kind of waste." While cloth diapers require extra effort, especially while travelling, Anjani found the added work worth it. "You need to clean, pack and wash them – even at restaurant stops – but it is a choice I

made for the environment and animals. In the first year and a half, it is mostly about diapers. That is the main area where I tried to be mindful."

Anjani and her husband are also careful about the toys and clothes they buy for Dev. The play gym was purchased from a second-hand store called @shoptwicetreasured on Instagram.

"We prefer wooden toys, especially locally sourced ones, and avoid shopping online where possible." She adds, "We try not to buy plastic toys. Thankfully, he is more into books, so we focus on buying books and only a few toys." For clothing, she turned to traditional practices. "For his clothing, during the first year, we stitched his clothes using leftover blouse fabric from saris." She also made jhablas and other small clothes using soft cotton fabric available at home.

Even travel is planned with intention. Anjani carries her son's cutlery and food, including *sathu maavu* powder. Resorts have become easier to manage now, but she was very particular about what Dev ate during the early months. There are also certain baby products Anjani chooses not to buy. "We avoid moisturisers, body washes, and commercial laundry liquids." For washing his clothes, she uses a bioenzyme-based liquid called Sukizyme, recommended by Kavitha Sivakumar from Namma Ooru Foundation. "It has a mild fragrance to mask strong odours." She has begun introducing sustainability concepts to Dev. "He has learned to segregate waste using blue and green bins." She notes he already knows which waste goes where and is comfortable participating in the process.

WHO's road safety toolkit aligns with CUMTA's mobility plan, says Bicycle Mayor of Chennai

Felix John presents his wish list, which includes the creation of an "Active Mobility Cell" for walking and cycling in Chennai; and more community volunteering efforts to make the city safer for users of non-motorised transport

LIFFY THOMAS

Institutions and municipal bodies seeking to promote non-motorised forms of transport with a girding of safety now have a guiding light – "Make Walking and Cycling Safe", launched by the World Health Organisation at the Eighth United Nations Global Road Safety Week (May 12 to 18).

Designed for policy makers, governments, civil society organisations, private sector, and other stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating efforts in integrating walking and cycling into transport, health, environmental and education policies, the toolkit calls for bold action in promoting safe road use through public awareness and behaviour change campaigns.

It features case studies to showcase real-world examples of how these policy options are being successfully put into practice.

Felix John, Bicycle Mayor of Chennai, says the toolkit aligns perfectly with the "Comprehensive Mobility Plan" being readied by Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority

(CUMTA). "By putting safety and accessibility in the forefront, it gives legitimacy to community efforts," says John, an advocate for active mobility.

The toolkit can guide CUMTA, CMDA, GCC, GTP to enforce safer speed limits, create calming infrastructure at school zones and protect cycling and walking infrastructure. "While we have seen efforts by civil society organisations and the local body to promote non-motorised form of transport, there is always more credibility when WHO collaborates for this initiative," says John.

John says Chennai is one of the first states to launch the Non-Motorised Transport Policy, when it did so in 2014 with the help of ITDP. "We have a policy but not much emphasis is being placed on implementation or adoption. Priority is being given to a vehicle-centric approach," says John.

John Felix's wish list includes creation of an "Active Mobility Cell" for walking and cycling in Chennai. "More community volunteers should be invited to be part of efforts to make the city safer for non-motorised transport," adds John.



Cyclists on Swami Sivananda Salai. PHOTO: R RAGU

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

Maria 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.

Venkatraman Karthikeyan, 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. Karthikeyan.

As heat-related fatigue can be hard on seniors, particularly those with such ailments, Dr. Karthikeyan 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.

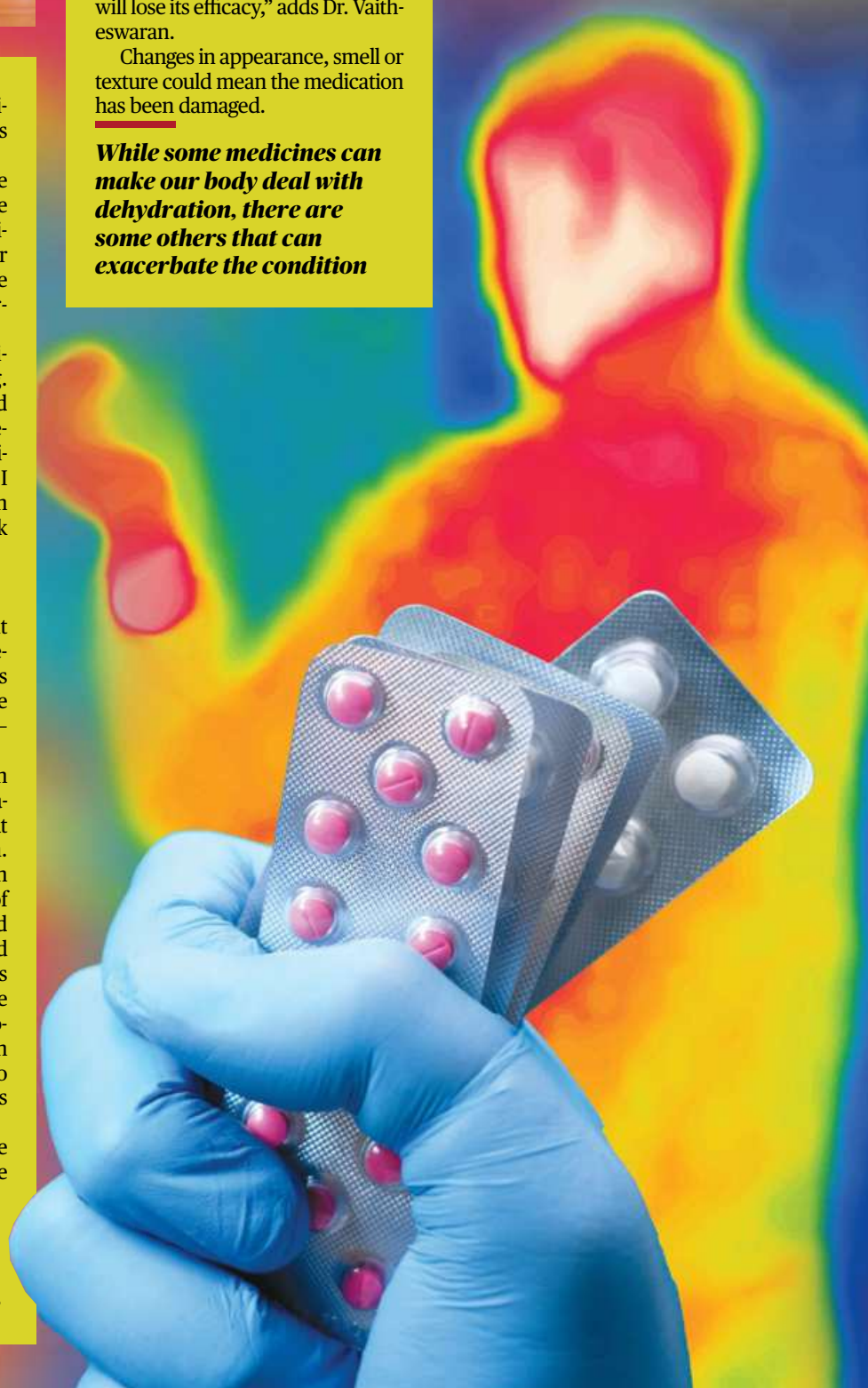
"The dosage of some of the medicines might have to be changed depending on the timing of the dose and how it causes those problems. Some medicines such as Lithium, which we prescribe for bi-polar disorder,

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





Summer camp remembers its favourite volunteer

The “Balu Sir Summer Camp” organised at Bala Mandir had its valedictory function recently

Once upon a time (well, that is how most stories start) there was a kindred soul, a storyteller whose passion was to regale children with stories, anecdotes and songs. Lovingly referred to as “Balu Sir” (his real name was Vishwanath Y Gaitonde), he was an integral part of Bala Mandir management for almost six decades and was the driving force behind all initial major milestone construction projects. Vishwanath Gaitonde had the zest of a child and the wisdom of a sage. He played many important roles including that of the first Principal of Industrial Training

Centre, Treasurer and Trustee. Above all, he was the favourite of all the children and related to them in his own special way as their “Balu sir”.

The event

As part of the cultural and learning centre initiatives, the Balu Sir Summer Camp is organised in Bala Mandir every year during the April May for 12 working days, in memory V.Y. Gaitonde, who volunteered his free time for the children of BM till his demise in July 2013. He spread love and a caring concern for the batches of children he met

year after year till his demise. Many old inmates of the home fondly recall his delightful and imaginative songs and stories, and the joy he brought into their lives. The camp is appropriately named, in his memory, as the Balu Sir Summer Camp.

This is the 11th year of the summer camp, and it was conducted in two sections - Senior (classes 1 - 5) and Junior (LKG, UKG, Toddlers) - which was attended by both Bala Mandir Home children and Bala Mandir Schools day-scholars, including few children from Bala Mandir Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children. Activities like craft and dance were taught to the junior children, while activities like art and drawing, craft, dance and theater (mime) were taught to the senior children.

Resource persons from outside Bala Mandir: Dance 1 - Santhosh and Team; Dance 2 - Kathak - Devaniya Dance School; Dance 3 - Ghanavi and Team; Theater (Mime) - Creashakthi Praveen & team.

At the valedictory function on May 10, A. Joseph Xavier, member, Child Welfare Committee, Chennai South Zone was the chief guest.

Panel discussion on high risk pregnancy conducted



The Obstetric & Gynaecological Society of Southern India (OGSSI) celebrated Mother's day on Sunday, 11th May, by conducting a CME on high risk pregnancy.

Senior doctors from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have participated in the knowledge sharing sessions, which included panel discussions.

Postgraduates who attended the session benefited largely.

Consultant Obstetrician and Gynecologist Hema Divakar from Bengaluru was the chief guest of the summit. The programme was organised by Sampath Kumari. S, president of OGSSI and M.Meena, secretary of OGSSI

Culinary workshops



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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