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MALAYALAM LITERARY FESTIVAL IN CHENNAI ON AUGUST 10

To be held at Vivekananda House Campus, the event will feature a day-long lecture series and four micro plays **P4**



MATCHING STRIDES

Walk Along 3.0 by Young Indians Chennai will have the able-bodied walking alongside the differently abled at Elliotts Beach on August 10 **P6**

SPOTLIGHT ON MARINA

Southern section of the beach declared a non vending zone



Greater Chennai Corporation has installed boards on the part of the Marina beach along Marina Loop Road announcing that it is a non-vending zone. So, the sellers of light eats have moved out of the space. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

'Display a timings board at this library'



I have been visiting the library at Marina Beach since was wearing a school uniform – now that is a long time ago, nearly six decades ago.

Back then, we made do with the most basic amenities. Just a fan to keep us from cool.

Recently, the it was renovated

with features aimed at providing creature comforts, including air conditioners. The new-look and well-appointed facility was opened by Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister.

One basic thing has been missed out. I request the authorities

to have a board displaying the daily working hours and weekly holiday details at the front gate itself, so that passers-by will be know when they can set foot in the premises.

C. R. Sainathan,
Tiruvallikeni

Write to us at
downtownfeedback
@thehindu.co.in about
events in and around your
neighbourhood

'Restore this first aid clinic'

In 2019, GCC opened three first aid clinics – essentially kiosks kitted out with medicine and equipment that can offer the first response – on the Marina Beach. Due to Chennai Metro work two of these first aid clinics stopped functioning and the one existing near Marina Beach selfie point on the beach road is kept locked.

The kiosk looks good from the outside, but is used by conservancy workers as a material recovery facility.

This first aid clinic should go back to functioning as one.

R. Kasim Razvi is a resident of Mylapore



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5th Street, Luz Avenue, Mylapore
Near Nageswara Rao Park

Branches of tree carelessly trimmed for procession

SANJEEVI

I am both sad and angry about the reckless damage inflicted on a three-year-old tree located right in front of our house at Kustian Beach Street in Santhome. This tree had become a landmark in our neighbourhood. The branches were carelessly trimmed without any prior notice, resulting in a disfigured and weakened tree.

This was no ordinary tree, we had lovingly tended to it over the last three years, and it had become a refuge for many, including vendors seeking shade beneath its

boughs. Its presence held deeper meaning, serving as a symbol of community and generosity.

This is not the first instance of the neighbourhood church damaging this tree to accommodate their annual car procession. Each year, trees on the stretch endure severe pruning, without regard for its health or the feelings of those who care for it. I urge the church officials to consider alternative solutions for their procession that respect our environment and community resources.

Sanjeevi is a resident of Kustian Beach Street, Santhome



When will pavement work in Gopalapuram be completed?

SRIRAM

Recently, I went to drop my grandson, who is in LKG at DAV Girls School in Gopalapuram. The sight of the pavement is disappointing.

Mounds of sand, bricks lie scattered along the pavement as part of improvement work that has been going on for at least two months since the school reo-

pened in June 2025.

There is heavy traffic on the stretch from 8:30 a.m. onwards as the school starts at 9 a.m. School vans, share autorickshaws, autorickshaws, private cars and two-wheelers drop the kids and there is utter chaos.

Tiny tots struggle to walk on the platform as everybody wants to reach the school gate before the first bell.

In the afternoon, school vans are parked for pickups with one side of the van on the platform and the other side on the road in a slanting position.

I do not know when this work is expected to be completed, but GCC must spare a thought for the safety of children.

Sriram is a resident of the neighbourhood

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 contact number.

'Service lane waits for mending exercise'

The service lane under Kodambakkam flyover on Kodambakkam High Road is marked by potholes and prone to water stagnation during rains. Motorists and pedestrians find it difficult to use the lane.

*N. Ravikkumar,
Nungambakkam*

The service lane under the flyover on Kodambakkam High Road.
PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B



A hyperlocal delivery model in Mylapore

BASKAR SESHADRI

If you have some documents that need to be delivered at super quick time and you are ham-handed in using apps to get a delivery person at your door, despair not. There is Ravichandran to bail you out.

The Mylapore resident would deliver those documents or anything else to the desired place in the city at a reasonable rate. Whether it is a small parcel to Adambakkam or a huge stack of documents to Tambaram, Ravichandran is out there for you. He will get started at 9 a.m. and work till dusk. Ravichandran can be reached on 94458 61874.

Baskar Seshadri is a resident of Mylapore



Listen to **monsoon ragas**

The 24th edition of Barkha Ritu will be presented today at Narada Gana Sabha

Banyan Tree Events, a premier cultural organisation, presents the Chennai edition of its iconic music festival Barkha Ritu on August 3 at Narada Gana Sabha (from 5.30 p.m. onwards).

In its 24th year now, Barkha Ritu is the country's longest-running thematic music festival celebrating the spirit of the monsoons through classical music, said a press release. This year's Chennai concert promises a rich and immersive experience of monsoon ragas – deeply evocative compositions that capture the moods, emotions, and essence of the rainy season. The evening's line-up features two enthralling performances: Pt. Rahul Shivkumar Sharma (Santoor); and Sandeep Narayan and Pt. Jayateerth Mevundi (Carnatic and Hindustani vocal duet)

These renowned artistes will present a unique musical confluence that bridges Hindustani and Carnatic traditions, offering



audiences an unforgettable evening steeped in melody, heritage and atmosphere.

Tickets for the event are available on BookMyShow.

Industrialist honoured



National Integrity Cultural Academy honoured K. Babuji, chairman of Vivek Associates with "Star of Excellence Award" at its event called Let's Touch the Sky. According to a press release, he was honoured in recognition of his contribution to industry sector.

College Road is now **Jaishankar Salai**

College Road in Nungambakkam will henceforth be known as Jaishankar Salai.

A resolution was recently passed in the Council Meeting of the Greater Chennai Corporation to this effect. The road has been now named after yesteryear actor Jaishankar.

College Road does not take its name from Women's Christian Col-

lege or other institutions on that road, if you thought so. The College of Fort St. George once functioned from the campus of Directorate of Public Instructions (DPI).

As per reports in *The Hindu*, the college was constructed to teach "Indian-ness". The British wanted to create a reservoir of information for the deputies who would then be able to rule India better.

Contest to celebrate **Madras Day**

Inviting all citizens to share heartfelt stories that capture the spirit of Chennai by August 15

Super Chennai, a citizen-powered urban initiative has launched 'Namma Stories', a short film contest inviting citizens to capture the lives, streets, memories, and everyday magic that define the city. Launched as a run-up to Madras

Day, the contest seeks to honour Chennai through the lens of its people - celebrating its unscripted soul, the beauty, the chaos, the charm, and the ever-evolving change that makes the city timeless, said a release.

Namma Stories invites filmmakers, students, professionals, residents and everyday storytellers to showcase the beauty of Chennai from their lens to the world.

There is no age limits, no technical barriers – just a powerful story that brings the city to life.

Entries are open till August 15, and the winner will be announced on August 22 on the occasion of Madras Day. One standout short film will take home a cash prize of ₹1,00,000, said the release.

Each short film can have a duration of up to 5 minutes, and must spotlight Chennai in a meaningful way - whether through a personal memory, a powerful social message, a fictional narrative set in the city, or a documentary-style portrayal of its neighborhoods and people, added the release.

A rickety ride



▼ An uneven stretch of Shafee Mohammed Street in Thousand Lights. PHOTO. RAGU R

Rotary Club of Madras East inaugurates **Healing Tiny Hearts**

President Balaji Sreenivasan of The Rotary Club of Madras East (RCME) inaugurated the 5th Edition of Healing Tiny Hearts, a flagship project dedicated to supporting children born with congenital heart defects.

This project started in June 2021 as a mission of hope and healing to become a beacon of life for hundreds of children.

"Many children across the country are born with heart anomalies that require early surgical intervention. However, access to such critical care remains out of reach for several families due to financial constraints. Addressing this urgent need, RCME, with Apollo

Children's Hospital as its clinical partner, launched Healing Tiny Hearts with a clear vision: No child should be denied the chance to live a full life due to lack of medical support," said Balaji in a release.

In the 5th edition, the initiative aims to identify and support 750 children by providing them with free life-saving heart surgeries over the course of the year. The health care team headed by Dr Neville Solomon, supported by Dr Muthu are the main reason for this soulful project, said the release.

This initiative is made possible through the CSR initiative of LTIMindtree Foundation.

CMRL to enforce **cleanliness norms** strictly

Taking into account the increasing public complaints regarding the use of chewable tobacco products and the resulting spitting and littering on Metro trains and premises, the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is stepping up enforcement measures to maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

CMRL will intensify patrols during non-peak hours and implement random physical checks at all metro stations, as chewable tobacco products cannot be detected through metal detectors, a release stated.

Platform security personnel will closely monitor commuters' activity. Commuters found violating cleanliness norms will be fined under the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002, and Metro Railways Carriage and Ticket Rules, 2014.

The CMRL urges commuters to cooperate in ensuring a clean, safe and pleasant travel, added the release.

School in Mylapore celebrates silver jubilee



Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Mylapore witnessed a heartwarming and vibrant evening, one that tried handsomely to telescope 25 years into a few fleeting hours under a spotlight.

The event, which marked the culmination of the silver jubilee celebrations of Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, chose gratefulness and allowed the various constituencies -- the school management, alumni, staff, students and parents

-- to bask in the moment.

It was a soiree in which students and alumni displayed their skills designed just for a stage and an audience. The highlight was a video by the alumni that stitched together individual memories and institutional achievements.

Honorary secretary Vatsala Narayanaswami lit the ceremonial lamp, marking the beginning of the evening's festivities.

A cultural programme, meticulously curated and delectably executed, followed. It was not unbri- dled entertainment, but one built

around the school's ethos and focus areas.

The school has stood as much for cultural expression as for academics, and the choice of performances mirrored that worldview. Alumna Janani rendered a classical song. Students presented an invocatory dance. Alumni Nithila and Tharikasree presented a folk and fusion dance; this performance managed to evoke cherished school memories for many in the audience.

The school boys brought the cultural segment to a thumping close



Former teachers were felicitated and cultural programmes were conducted as part of the silver jubilee celebrations of Sir Sivaswami Kalalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School,. PHOTOS : RAGHUNATHAN SR

through a lively Western dance performance.

A specially curated video presentation by alumni followed, taking the audience on a touching journey through the school's rich legacy as well as highlighting the milestones and achievements of the institution, says the press release,.

Akila Senior teacher presented a detailed report highlighting the various activities and services undertaken to commemorate the Silver Jubilee.

The formal meeting began with a warm welcome address by school Principal S.K.Uma Shankar who acknowledged the presence of distinguished guests and lauded the school's growth over the past 25 years. This was followed by NBGES Presidential Address by Srinivasan K. Swamy who shared his words of wisdom, along with insightful speeches by Honorary Secretary Vatsala Narayanaswami, Joint Secretary and Treasurer S. Sridharan

and Secretary V.S. Subramanian, who reminisced about the institution's journey and laid out our future aspirations.

A special highlight of the evening was the introduction and felicitation of the Chief Guest, Tennis Legend Ramesh Krishnan, a renowned Indian Davis Cupper. Another significant moment was the release of the Silver Jubilee Souvenir, with the first copy being formally handed over to the chief guest by the NBGES President.

In his address, Ramesh Krishnan lauded the school's commitment to holistic education and congratulated the management, teachers, and alumni on reaching this commendable milestone. The programme continued with the felicitation of past and present teachers, acknowledging their relentless dedication and contributions. The event concluded with a gracious vote of thanks by the Vice Principal V. Subbulakshmi followed by the National Anthem.

Malayalam literary festival in Chennai on August 10

To be held at Vivekananda House Campus, the event will feature a day-long lecture series and four micro plays. The highlight will be the conferring of the literary award for 2025 on Karivellur Murali

Asrayam, which has an active cultural presence among Malayalees in Chennai, is holding the Kavalam Narayana Panicker Literary Festival on August 10, 2025, at Vivekananda House Campus, opposite Marina Beach.

The highlight of the literary festival will be the conferring of the annual literary award for 2025 on renowned playwright and poet Karivellur Murali. Actress and theatre activist Rohini will present the award to the playwright-poet at the inaugural ceremony of the literary festival, says a press release.

The literary festival will feature a day-long lecture series focusing on the literary legacy of Kavalam Narayana Panicker. Topics include "Malayalam Theatre Movement and Kavalam Narayana Panicker" and "Malayalam Drama:



Changing Imageries", with talks by Raja Warri- er (theatre practitioner) and V. Hikmathulla (facul-

ty, Unity Women's College, Manjeri). Other speakers and participants include P.M. Girish,

Karivellur Murali (right) will receive the literary award for 2025 at the festival

Shyamala Jayaprakash, Dr. C.G. Rajendrababu, and A.V. Anoop.

The event will also feature four micro plays presented by Chennai-based theatre groups led by Abhilash Parameswaran, Jophin Manimala, Gireesh Karamael, and Sreeranjini.

Additional attractions include a photo exhibition, a musical tribute (Gaananjali) with select songs of Kavalam, Nattilekkoru Vandi youth group will present an anti-drug awareness programme promoting the message "Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Knowledge".

A massive contribution

With over fifty plays to his credit, the award recognises his lifelong

contribution to Malayalam theatre. A multifaceted personality -- actor, playwright, director, lyricist and public speaker -- he currently serves as the Secretary of Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy. His acclaimed plays include Che Guevara, Abubakkarinte Umma Parayunnu, Kuruthippadam, and Agrayaanam, among over 60 notable works. He is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, says the press release.

A jury consisting of literary critic and orator P.K. Rajasekharan, former Doordarshan Director Baiju Chandran, Bindu Venugopal, K.D. Santhosh Kumar, P.A. Suresh Kumar, and P.K. Ramachandran selected him for the award. The award includes a cash prize of ₹25,000, a sculpture designed by Joshi Perambra, and a citation.

Solar energy: get the billing right

LIFFY THOMAS

The bi-monthly common area electricity bill has not brought residents of Geeyam Kalyan, a 10-unit apartment community at Thiruvengadam Street in RA Puram, any cheer in these two years. In fact, it has been a disappointment. When residents moved in to this new apartment, solar panels were already installed on the terrace to power common utilities like lifts, lights and motor - an amenity residents were proud about and hoping to see considerable reduction in their bill.

However, every cycle, the bills looked unreasonably high. "We were not clear how consumption is charged and there wasn't anybody to guide us properly," says Geetha Venkataraman, secretary of Geeyam Kalyan Residents Association.

An awareness meeting organised by Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) in the colony came in as an eye-opener.

Residents realised that the solar panels in the apartment was connected to 'net feed-in' instead of opting for 'net metering'. Both net metering and net feed-in tariffs are methods for compensating households and organisations for the energy they produce, and the rates vary.

Calculation by CAG showed that the community's total energy consumption for common services bi-monthly as 1250 kWh. The energy bill through net feed in billing came between ₹9,000 and ₹ 10,000. The same through net metering billing would be ₹



A rooftop solar photovoltaic plant at an apartment.

5,000.

"Once we learnt that we are connected to net feed-in solar billing mechanism, we contacted our solar vendor who applied to Tangedco, paid a fee to convert to net metering," says Geetha that their next billing is expected in the first week of September where they are hoping to see a difference.

And if the electricity bill drops then the association would think of extending solar grids to cover lights and fans of individual flats, adds Geetha.

Complicated billing

The initial experience with solar for residents of Vrikshah Gurukulam in C.P. Ramaswamy Street in Abiramapuram was also not sweet. The 10-unit apartment complex had

Here is how two apartment associations in Chennai found their faith in solar power as a cost-effective option, restored

Net metering vs Net feed-in

In net metering, if the solar energy produced by the consumer exceeds the consumption level, the surplus energy will automatically be exported to the TANGEDCO's distribution network (the grid). The consumer pays only for the net energy consumed (that is, import - export).

When the solar energy produced is lower than the consumption level, the shortfall is drawn from the grid and controlled by a bi-directional meter. In net metering, excess energy will be adjusted in the next billing cycle when the exported energy is more than the imported. Net metering is available for the domestic category.



A domestic consumer billed under net feed-in mechanism has the option of migrating to a net metering mechanism.

The solar energy for net billing or net feed-in mechanism is available to all electricity consumer categories (except huts and agriculture) irrespective of tariff and voltage levels. The feed-in tariff is decided by the regulator and depends on geography, capital cost and installed capacity.

Source: CAG

Gain clarity

Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group invites resident groups to express any nagging questions about renewable energy adoption they might have and get them clarified

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

From submitting an application to deciphering the billing system, processes towards adoption of the solar option are hardly straightforward.

Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules 2019 mandates that at least one third of terrace space be reserved for placement of solar photovoltaic panels to get a completion certificate from CMDA. From conversations, one learns that residents in many new apartment complexes struggle to understand the nitty-gritty of rooftop solar installation and along the way, some even decide to give up on the green energy option.

"We have seen in many cases the developer or vendor has half-baked knowledge and is unable to explain the functioning including how the bill is generated to the resident. In some cases, the handover is not done properly," says K. Vishnu Mohan Rao,

programme lead, Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG).

The Chennai-based non-profit, which shows up at RWA meetings to create awareness on rooftop solar systems, says many potential consumers would think twice about investing in solar energy when they come across such negative feedback from communities that have already invested in it.

Economic feasibility and help in identifying a vendor are among questions bothering prospective consumers.

"For people who have already installed (prosumers), they fail to understand financial aspects such as calculation of CUF (capacity utilisation factor) and network charges by TNPDC, says Vishnu. He says not counting self-consumption is another common concern they have encountered in their meetings.

As part of a two-year project to understand Tamil Nadu's journey in energy awareness, a team from CAG is conducting awareness programmes that are free.

The NGO is also working with various stakeholders including TNPDC, banks and vendors to push for renewable energy.

"We have technical experts such as an energy auditor, engineers who have graduated in renewable energy and can clarify queries," says Subramani M., researcher with CAG.

Tangedco's five zones have also been conducting grievance meetings to address solar-related concerns from the public.

For details, call Subramani of CAG at 88072 14008





SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Inclusion can arrive in an air of condescension. It is the idea of the able-bodied “including” the differently abled in “their world”. It is true that the differently abled need to be included in this monstrous world that shut them out in the first place, but it has to be done in a manner that upholds their dignity.

By choosing one preposition over another, Walk Along 3.0 has silently condemned this unconscious, nevertheless odious conceitedness, and asserted the place in the world the differently abled should enjoy as a right, not as a dole. Young Indians (Yi) Chennai’s annual flagship accessibility event, Walk Along 3.0 does not term itself a walk for persons with disabilities (PwDs), but a walk with them. The walk has one able-bodied person matching strides with one differently abled person. “It is about presence, not performance,” say organisers. “You do not walk ahead or behind. You walk together.”

And the event having walked the talk, it has done three editions on the trot, growing in stature from edition to edition.

In normal circumstances, the past is the best predictor of the future. Hence a peek into the first two editions to know what to expect of the third, whose approaching footsteps can be heard. Walk Along 3.0 would arrive on August 10, 2025 at Elliotts Beach in Besant Nagar.

In 2023, the first edition of Walk Along played out in a closed space at Olympia Tech Park, Guindy, bringing key disability organisations and the public in a structured, accessible environment. Yi partnered with institutions that have been working in the accessibility space for decades, aiming to

Matching Strides

Walk Along 3.0 by Young Indians Chennai will have the able-bodied walking alongside the differently abled at Elliotts Beach on August 10. On the sidelines, stalls will showcase a world accessible at multiple levels that persons with disabilities should be able to claim as a right



design a walk that was not performative, but made space for genuine conversations and connectedness. Walk Along 1.0 featured experiential stalls, including a demo zone for assistive technology by the National Centre for Assistive Health Technology (NCAHT), backed by ICMR. Visitors could try out Indian-made wheelchairs with



stair-climbing capability and upright support. Inclusive cafés such as Winners Bakery, run by individuals with Down syndrome and acid attack survivors, brought warmth and flavour to the event. Able Aura brought adaptive sports to the table. Yi’s Yuva student chapters put up awareness stalls.

In 2024, the event – Walk Along

Glimpses of the first two editions of Walk Along.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and new partners – including folk artists and a Kolam artist working with neurodivergent children.

The event is expected to be graced by Ma. Subramanian, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, as the chief guest.

Among the general public attending the event, there would be around 150 members of Young Indians; and also representatives from CII member companies.

Registrations will close by August 5 or 6, or upon reaching the cap of 1,000 participants. Each individual, including caregivers, must register separately. Institutional entries are capped to ensure diversity.

“Walk Along 3.0 is not just an event. It is a reflection of the values we stand for at Yi Chennai,” says Varan Mittal, Chair, Yi Chennai. “As



2.0 – moved into a public space, being conducted at a Greater Chennai Corporation park in Adyar maintained by Bharat Matrimony under Namma Chennai 2.0. With increased visibility and participation from over 25 institutions, the event welcomed more than 800 people. Walk Along 2.0 repeated the features of the first edition, and enhanced it with additions such as art circles; tailoring stalls by Vidya Sagar; and accessible products made by trainees. Participants received framed certificates. “Our planning focused on ensuring dignity, visibility and a joyful experience for every participant,” says Tobin Jose, Co-chair, Yi Chennai. “The execution is a result of incredible collaboration – from schools and NGOs to government bodies and our own young volunteers.”

we walk together – individuals of all abilities, backgrounds and stories – we are reminded of the power of empathy and unity in building an inclusive society while celebrating the city we love the most, Chennai.” And yes, the event, always organised around this time of year, has celebratory undertone, one acknowledging the long continuing history of the city, as Madras and Chennai. “We hope this walk not only sensitises people, but also sparks a ripple effect – where conversations turn into actions, and actions into long-term impact,” adds Varan. “Our dream is to see a Chennai where inclusion is instinctive, not optional.” To participate in Walk Along 3.0, one can scan the QR code and register, or do so on Google Forms – <https://forms.gle/xqQ5UurKKQcRgPp7>

The upcoming edition

For Walk Along 3.0, at Elliotts Beach Road on August 10, 2025, a 500-700 metre stretch will be closed to traffic, made fully accessible with ramps, and lined with stalls, performances, and sensory-friendly games. Eleven colleges will volunteer this year, with both returning



PLAN YOUR WEEK

Drama festival from August 9



Madras South Lions Charitable Trust (MSLC Trust), a unit of Lions Club of South Madras, is organising its 13th drama festival from August 9 to August 17 at Bapalal Bhavan, Valmiki Nagar and

Thiruvannamiyur.

The line-up of the plays: Satya Sai Creations's Mapillai Ganesh in 'Killadi Mapple' by Ezhichur Aravindhan (August 9); Ponniyin Selvan and Friends's divine documentary 'Aranganayakam' by Bombay

Kannan (August 10); Stage Creations's Kathadi Ramamurthy in 'Pillaiyar Pidikka' by SL Naanu (Aug 11); PMG Mayurapriya's 'Ennadi penne' by P.Muthukumaran (August 12); Fab's theatre's Fathima Babu in 'Un Kannil Neer Vazhindhal' by T. V. Radhakrishnan (August 13); Koothapiran Navabharath Theatres's 'Leela Vinodham' by R.Vignesh(August 14); Dummies Drama's 'Kaanal Neero' by Sridhar Ramaswami(August 15); SRMG Creations 's Saneeswaran pugazh Gopalakrishnan in 'Irandu Kannal Pesum Mozhiyil' (Aug 16th); and Dummies Drama's 'Kapidhwaja' by Sreevathson V (Aug 17th).

The inaugural function is scheduled on August 9 at 6.15pm. Past District Governor, Lions Club International Dist.324 IC PMJF Lion L.Shanthakumar will be guest of honour at the inaugural function on August 9 at 6.15 p.m.

Admission is free and all plays are scheduled at 6.30 p.m.

Special box for Aadi Friday puja

For the Aadi month, Sri Krishna Sweets has introduced Maa Vilakku special box. This will be available on all Thursdays and Fridays of Aadi month in all their shops. The sweet box also comes with ring ghee with thread (theri) for the poojai.



Auditions for the next Face of Chennai under way

IRIS Events is celebrating its 25th year and this time auditions for Iris Face of Chennai and Iris Face Of Tamil Nadu will be held across Tamil Nadu. The Miss and Mr titles are open to those from 18 to 29 years; and married women up to 50 years. A mega audition will

be held in September followed by selection of finalists in all the categories. The finale is scheduled to be held September 27.

The auditions for the next Face of Chennai is open. For details, contact 9884783510/ 9841206506

Workshop on entrepreneurial opportunities in solar energy sector

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, Department of MSME, is conducting a training programme on installation of solar power system from August 11 to 13 at its premises in SIDCO Industrial Estate, EDII Office Road, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, the following concepts will be covered: introduction to solar energy, entre-

preneurial opportunities in solar energy sector, business models in this sector, relevant computer software, financial planning, regulations and subsidy schemes. Those above 18 years of age and who have completed class 10 can take part. The institute offers hostel facility for the participants on first come, first serve basis.

For details, call 8668102600 / 8072914694.

Scholarship test for higher education

Education company PhysicsWallah (PW) announced its fourth edition of PWNSAT (PhysicsWallah National Scholarship Cum Admission Test) 2025, a scholarship test. This initiative attempts to support NEET-UG and IIT-JEE aspirants by making education and guidance accessible to students, regardless of their financial background.

The initiative was announced at an event held in Chennai, where PW Regional Head of Tamil Nadu, PW Vidyapeeth Chennai, Centre Head and Business Head came together to explain the various benefits of PWNSAT 2025. Furthermore, Principals of multiple schools from the city, also attended the event.

The PWNSAT 2025 exam will be conducted across both online and offline modes, trying to make the exam more accessible to students across regions. Students choosing the online mode can appear for the exam between October 1 and October 15, 2025. For those opting for the offline mode, the exam will be conducted on October 5 and October 12, 2025, at all PW Vidyapeeth and Pathshala centres. Registration for the exam is free and now open to students from Class V to XII, as well as those who have completed Class XII, across both PCM and PCB streams. Results are scheduled to be announced on 25th October, 2025.

The top performers in these exams will be awarded cash rewards as well as a 100% scholarship, covering the entire fee.

Pickle making workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on making pickles and pastes on August 7 at its premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required. For details, call 044 - 2953 0048.

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Tree conservation organisation Nizhal has installed a board next to an old Strychnine tree in Injambakkam that was spared the axe during ECR widening work, having been declared rare by Chennai District Green Committee. Issuing a warning to the public, the board ensures the tree would not fall a victim to any act of carelessness and possible vandalism. This board will remain till the time the Forest Department installs a plaque emphasising the tree's heritage status

PRINCE FREDERICK

Where people cannot look beyond the commonplace, the unusual will not be recognised, let alone valued. In this milieu, those rubbing shoulders with the unusual might need to speak up for it. Tree conservation organisation Nizhal has taken that step, putting up a board that utters a strident word of warning to protect an old and rare Strychnine tree.

In Tamil, the wording follows the tone of the programming lan-

A strident warning



guage Prolog, being declarative (this is not an exact translation, but the communication proceeds somewhat along the lines of “if you bring harm to this tree, you will come to harm”) and not just plain imperative (which would have been “do not harm this tree”). There is official weight behind the move, the board carrying the logos of Greater Chennai Corporation

and Tamil Nadu Government in addition to Nizhal's.

Even if they were to live for an eon, a majority of people in Chennai would not recognise a Strychnine tree (Etimaram in Tamil) in the manner they would a neem. Going by documentation, Strychnos nux-vomica (the biological name for strychnine trees) has taken up a remarkably limited sur-



The tree

face area in Chennai. A venerable, hugely aged Strychnine tree is found at Ponni Amman Koil in Injambakkam on East Coast Road. The only other known Strychnine tree is at ICF, a Gen Z in comparison to its older relative in Injambakkam.

In the light of the species' rare presence, the old Strychnine tree in Injambakkam found a hedge of protection – a figurative hedge – being laid around it. The hedge held up when that section of East Coast Road was being widened. At the behest of T.D. Babu, part of Chennai District Green Committee and a key member of Nizhal, the State Highways Department took an extraordinary effort to ensure this tree continued to stand tall when most other things in its line were levelled to the ground to facilitate road-widening work. A storm-water drain skirted around the tree.

As proven time and again, a thing that survived a sledgehammer might find its end with a flyswatter. This idea took root in Babu's mind when he noticed a JCB

parked near the tree while he was driving past one day. He stopped and found out that power-cable laying work was being carried out close to the tree. Though he knew there was no plan to lift even a little finger against the tree, he felt impelled to tell the workers what this tree was all about. Babu says he also left his number with a roadside vendor nearby seeking that he be informed if any activity that was not in the interests of the tree was noticed.

Babu says he made sure that a board was installed to tell people about the tree's significance and issue a warning to anyone who might think of bringing harm to it.

Babu observes that Nizhal has given the Forest Department a list of trees in and around Chennai that have heritage value and therefore, ought to be protected at any cost. The Forest Department is preparing plaques for all these trees, explaining their significance and their “protected” status.

Until that plaque arrives, this board would do the job for this old Strychnine tree.

Getting less fussy by the day

PRINCE FREDERICK

The bronze winged jacana is in attendance where it is expected to be – wetlands removed from human presence. And also in places where you do not expect it to be – spaces that are hugely defined by human presence. That status report follows a study of wetlands as well as densely-populated residential neighbourhoods cheek by jowl with these wetlands in the Chennai Metropolitan Area.

Provide the bronze winged jacana with a space of moderate dimensions that offers the qualities of a wetland including a mat of

aquatic vegetation (which specifically is the point of this report), and it would be as much at home as any human homebody would be. This space could even be hemmed in by two compound walls built by human hands, but that is immaterial to the bronze winged jacana. But do not get it wrong – the bronze winged jacana still has the timorousness of the European Dwarf Angora. The bird has not taken leave of its amyglada, the part of the brain that whips up the fear response. When prying eyes are around, it would still duck of sight, disappearing into the vegetation. Whatever we had known about this



A juvenile bronze winged jacana at a vacant plot in Perumbakkam that is matted with Ludwigia adscendens, on July 28, 2025. Photo: Prince Frederick

bird in and around Chennai is not outdated syllabus. But there is a resilience to the bird that seems refreshingly new – or rather, getting newer by the day.

It clings to marshy vacant patches in neighbourhoods close to wetlands in Chennai Metropolitan Area, tenaciously. What is noteworthy is the flexibility it displays in terms of the aquatic vege-

tation. It would demand a thick mat of aquatic vegetation, but is not too particular about the plant species that makes up that cushion of protection. At a vacant plot in the Shanti Nagar-Kailash Nagar region in Perumbakkam, the bronze winged jacanas display this flexibility. The plot sports Ludwigia adscendens which can hardly serve as a hideout unlike a

shock of water hyacinth with its big broad leaves, which the bronze-winged jacana is hugely comfortable with. The bronze winged jacanas are at home in this patch: quite literally, as, to all appearances, a female bronze winged jacana maintains a harem of males (being a polyandrous species, it is just acting in character by doing so), and one already can see a juvenile bronze winged jacana ranging around that patch.

Ludwigia adscendens puts out a creeper of a stem where nodes put fresh shoots. This plant can form a reasonably dense mat, which however like a sparse head of hair, displays bald patches when it comes under bright sunlight. When flustered at perceived threat, the bronze winged jacanas in this patch rush to the section of the land that sports relatively thicker vegetation, again Ludwigia adscendens.