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A VOICE FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED SINGERS

Musicians with disabilities do not find themselves on a level-playing field. Vinod Venugopal and Reshma have launched Samagratha, a platform that provides these musicians with opportunities **P5**



MAKING PROFESSIONAL COURSES MORE INCLUSIVE

Through a new initiative, Karna Vidya Foundation is adding to the already existing e-book content for the visually impaired **P6**

Roadside kiosks begin to 'bloom' in Besant Nagar



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Wrapping one's head around Puya raimondii's biological time-table is hard. There is an involuted ingenuity to it. A bromelaid native to sections of Andes in South America, it takes an inordinately long time to bloom. When it does bloom (decades after the previous blooming) it is always news – that is the power a process exerts on humans when it arrives after a protracted delay, a delay that seems justified, even beneficial. Just have to embrace the fact that certain things take time to reach their fullest potential – the

puya raimondii of the world; and in our immediate world, Greater Chennai Corporation's kiosks in vending zones. The latter being marked by delays is a reality hard to comprehend.

Let us stay with the good news, which is that GCC's kiosks for roadside vendors stationed at Besant Nagar Second Avenue are beginning to "bloom", one after the other.

Over the last two weeks, they have been putting out petals of intent. They were first crowned with boards that trace their genesis to GCC. Following that, with the sheen of newly acquired paint, the kiosks began to glint in the sun. The most attention-grabbing sight

The users believe a tarpaulin spread over the kiosk would keep rainwater out of it

in recent days is neither of the two, but a couple of kiosks that have opened their shutters for business.

Assigned to a vendor named Kamakshi, one kiosk supports a petty shop cum snack and tea centre. Flipping through the pages of the user experience, rainwater (thanks to the downpour on March 11 and 12) reportedly seeps through the openings that show up when the shutters on both sides are raised open in a horizontal position. The users believe a tarpaulin spread over the kiosk would keep rainwater out of the kiosk.

The other functioning kiosk belonging to a vendor named Nirmala sells playthings for children.

Sharbudeen, secretary of Besant Nagar-based Bharathiya Small Traders Association, points out that the rear side of this kiosk faces a tall wall. Opening the rear door would become impossible if the kiosk is thrust into the space demarcated for



These images were taken on March 18, 2025. Photos: Prince Frederick

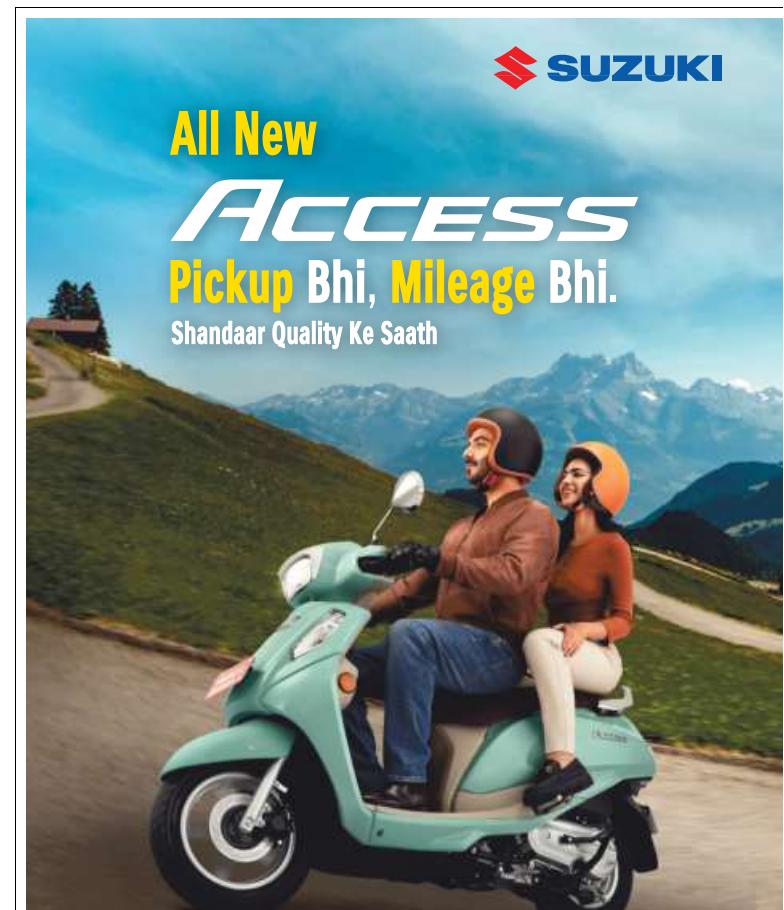
the placement of kiosks. The rear door needs to be kept open as a shelter for the vendor from rains and the sun.

In addition, he remarks the vendors (those with kiosks far away from the bus terminus) keenly feel the ab-

sence of a toilet. The GCC toilet is located at the end of Besant Nagar Second Avenue close to the MTC bus terminus. He makes a case for the installation of small, portable toilets (at least a couple of them) along the pavement.



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Indian jackal sighted at Perumbakkam wetland



On March 15, 2025, Sadasivam Shiva, a birder from Chromepet, headed to the Perumbakkam wetland looking for unusual feathers. As the migratory season is not over, only in its fag end, a surprise or two is par for the course. He was greeted with what was beyond doubt out of the ordinary, but the surprise did not arrive wrapped in feathers but a gleaming coat. He chanced upon an Indian jackal, which he photographed. The animal was in the far interior section of the wetland and he could manage only a distant snap with his telephoto zoom lens. The speculation is that the Indian jackal could have come from the forest area surrounding the Perumbakkam hill. This is the first ever sighting of an Indian jackal in these parts. These photos were taken by Sadasivam Shiva.



Two champions at the dining table

Thiruvanmiyur residents Abhinand and Ananya, who are siblings, talk about their ping-pong ambitions

K. KEERTHIVASAN

In school and elsewhere, not many know that P. B. Abhinand and M. Ananya, who are among the top table tennis players in the country in their age categories, are siblings.

Abhinand, who is ranked number one in Under-17 and number two in Under-19 in India. Abhinand's sister Ananya is number one in the State in U-15 and U-17 and number 2 in India in the U-15 category.

It is not often that you see a brother-sister duo being accomplished in the same sport.

"During my table tennis match, she gives me plenty of advice and whenever she plays, I see her matches and share my views about them," says Abhinand.

Ananya, a class IX student of Sankara Senior Secondary School in Adyar, is studious while Abhinand is in class XII pursuing edu-



cation through the open schooling.

"Our initials are also different. While my sister takes her initial from my father's name (Muralidharan) I take my initials from my grandfather's name, Pradhivadhi Bhayankaram (Narasimhan)," says Abhinand.

This month, the 14-year-old travelled abroad after nearly two years. She took part in WTT Youth Contender in Berlin and Czech Republic and in the Czech event, she won a bronze medal. "I was training for a while to strengthen my technique. I felt happy reaching the last four, beating few players from the Asian countries on the way," she says.

During my table tennis matches, she gives me plenty of advice and whenever she plays, I watch her matches and share my views about them

Early this month, Abhinand achieved International glory when he bagged the gold medal in the boys U-17 category of the WTT Youth Contender in Berlin and finished runner-up in the boys U-19 category of the WTT Youth Contender in Havirov.

They were both coached by Subin Kumar at Chennai Achievers TT Academy. Both swear by their coach. "Subin sir has been coaching me since I was five. He has played a huge role in my life as well as in my sister's. Without his mentoring, we could not have achieved so much," says Abhinand.

Both are ambitious and hard working and want to scale the utmost height in table tennis. Abhinand wants to become India's No.1 in the men's section and is keen to win a medal at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Ananya wants to perform better this year, which will be her first year in the women's section at the National level. "For a start, I want to make an impression by beating a few top-ranked paddlers," she says. There is no doubt Abhinand and Ananya, supported by their parents Muralidharan and Shanthi Muralidharan, will continue to make waves at the National and International circuit while supporting each other's career.

A celebration of literature and authors at OMR

SHIVANI DHULIYA

On March 16, 2025, BookWorms, the literary arm of FOMRRA, hosted its much-anticipated second meeting at Basil with a Twist restaurant in Sholinganallur. This gathering was more than just a routine event – it was a heartfelt celebration of books, authors and the thriving literary community that makes OMR's book culture unique.

Book exchange

The meeting coincided with the 15th edition of Book Swap, a beloved tradition in OMR. Over 100 books were exchanged, allowing attendees to share their favourite reads, discover new titles and pass on books that have made a lasting impact. This wonderful exchange not only fostered a love for literature but also encouraged a sustainable way to share stories. The Book Swap was expertly managed by Anitha, Shivani, Purnima and Aruna, who ensured its smooth execution.

Revisiting a classic

The afternoon's discussion focussed on Harper Lee's iconic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, with moderator Rohini Subramaniam leading the



The organisers and key participants at the second meeting of BookWorms, the literary arm of FOMRRA, on March 16, 2025. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

conversation. The group delved into the novel's timeless themes, examining the consistency of the young narrator, Scout, and reflecting on how Lee's moral compass shaped the narrative. The discussion also explored the novel's exploration of justice, racial inequality,

and empathy, and how these themes continue to resonate in today's world, sparking meaningful reflections on these crucial social issues.

Celebrating a local talent

A major highlight of the event was

Bookshelf is going to host a storytelling festival in May 2025

the release of *When Time Stands Still*, the debut novel by local author Sujatha Rangachari. Following the success of two OMR-based books launched during last year's OMR 360° carnival, Sujatha's book further added to the growing list of literary talent emerging from the

area. Ranjit Narayanan, co-host of the popular online writing forum ArtoonsInn, engaged in an open and insightful conversation with Sujatha, discussing her journey to publication and the challenges authors face today. The conversation also touched upon the growing trend of self-publishing, a topic that resonated with many aspiring authors in the audience.

'Bookshelf' introduced

Venkatraman and Sudha, OMR residents, introduced Bookshelf, an innovative online lending library designed specifically for children. With a vast collection of multi-lingual books catering to children aged 3 to 12, Bookshelf allows members to easily rent books online, add them to a cart, and schedule delivery. They also announced an upcoming Storytelling Festival to be held in OMR in May 2025, offering even more literary opportunities for the community to enjoy.

A literary community

The success of the second BookWorms meeting was evident, as attendees left with fresh perspectives on literature and a deeper sense of connection to their local literary community. This carefully curated event, organised by a passionate committee, highlighted the thriving book culture within OMR and underscored the importance of supporting local authors who contribute to Chennai's rich literary landscape.

(Shivani Dhuliya is a resident of OMR)

Message on water conservation rings loud

Children take home water conservation lessons from a workshop held in Besant Nagar

The WaterWise Workshop was held at The Learning Centre, Quest in Besant Nagar, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., on March 21, 2025 engaging 35 participants including 15 children in an interactive session on water conservation to observe World Water Day (March 22), according to press release from WWF-India.

Rainwater harvesting

The session on rainwater harvesting began with an introduction to WWF-India, followed by an insightful talk by Sekar Raghavan, director of The Rain Centre, Chennai. Known as Chennai's "Rain Man", he has been a



leading advocate for urban rainwater harvesting and sustainable water management for over two decades. His session went over these themes: What is rainwater harvesting? Understanding how rainwater can be collected and utilized efficiently. The state of rainwater management in Chennai. Known as Chennai's "Rain Man", he has been a

er harvesting systems. The importance of ponds and wells in groundwater recharge. Practical steps to set up a rainwater harvesting system at home. The impact of pollution, including plastics and chemicals, on water quality. In the Q&A session, participants discussed ways to reduce water consumption and restore water bo-

dies like lakes and ponds.

Interactive activities

The storytelling session was led by Renu Narayan, founder of KathaVriksh, an organisation that promotes storytelling as a tool for education and cultural preservation. Through her engaging narratives, she connects communities with environ-



An art activity at the workshop.

mental and heritage themes.

She narrated Boondh - Water Droplet – a creative story illustrating the water cycle, following a family of droplets from the sky to the ground and back again as rain. Another expressive story highlighted how even negative environmental situations can be reversed with effort, emphasising the importance of eco-restoration despite its challenges.

Music and art

Participants learned the

song "Ole Ole Rock is My Home", which had both children and adults enthusiastically joining in. Each participant was assigned a nature character such as a tree, a bird, or a river and responded musically when asked, "Where is your home?" The session concluded with a song and dance performance by children and adults on the Banana Song. Finally, an art activity was conducted where participants illustrated the characters they were named after.

INITIATIVES



Deepesh Bhaskar and his team of volunteers at different events.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



cradled in Deepesh's arms. The experience left him shaken.

"I knew I had to do something," he recalls. The COVID-19 lockdown gave him the opportunity to turn reflection into action. As he continued working in marketing, he delved deep into plastic research and waste management. A course on Climate



Change and Sustainable Development from the Centre for Science and Environment opened his eyes to the direct link between soil health and climate change. He soon realised that true impact required systemic change, not just individual action. And so, he started Nilayaan – an environmental services startup dedicated to making sustainability a fundamental part of events and everyday living – in the middle of the pandemic.

Nilayaan's philosophy is anything but abstract: introduce Nature-based solutions in people's everyday living and they will carry that ingrained practice into their moments of celebrations. After it sows the seeds of awareness among individuals and communities, Nilayaan nurtures what grows out of the effort by lining up the right tools for segregation and composting. It offers choice in terms of home and community composting kits, and the buyer can match one

with their composting situation at home or organisation.

As one can see from the testimonials on its Instagram page, many of those who have brought Nilayaan on board as their minimal waste celebration partner have been impacted by its work prior to it. Baby showers, birthdays and weddings form the chief part of the minimal-waste celebrations organised by Nilayaan.

Deepesh is embedded in the sustainability ecosystem, a situation that enables him to bring various entities – examples include Namma Ooru Foundation and Upcycle – on board to drive different aspects of what makes an event zero-waste.

The regular is interspersed with the out-of-the-way, now and then – such as the Harris Jayaraj's concert ('Rock On Harris') in October 2023 that Nilayaan associated with as a minimal-waste celebration partner.



This section spotlights initiatives undertaken by residents of Chennai to minimise the waste that reaches landfills

Party hard, but mindfully

Meet Deepesh Bhaskar, founder of Chennai-based startup Nilayaan, who is focussed on making celebratory events easy on the planet and our collective conscience

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

If you are a Jay Gatsby with a propensity for throwing extravagant parties (recall the central character in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*), then you would not want to let Deepesh Bhaskar anywhere near your event planning team. Deepesh would gauge the success of any celebratory event by what it leaves behind or rather, what it does not. The *numero uno* at an environmental services startup named Nilayaan (@nilayaan.earth), Deepesh dons many sustainability hats, one of which is that of a minimal-



waste celebration consultant.

The path to Nilayaan was paved with a dramatic event (as distressing as it was transformative), days of brow-knitting reflection, course alteration, fresh learning and finally as with any entrepreneurial effort, a leap of faith.

Having pursued a bachelor's as well as a master's degree in social work, Deepesh initially transitioned into marketing for financial stability. But everything changed the day he encountered a cow choking on a plastic bag in the middle of a road. Along with his friends, he tried desperately to save the animal, but the effort proved futile. The cow died



Traditional paper cups often contain a thin plastic coating, making them non-biodegradable. Instead, use bagasse (sugarcane pulp) cups and plates, which are fully compostable.

Hire steel plates and cups instead of purchasing them. Many apartments have RO filtration systems that waste 70% of water. Instead of letting this water go to waste, we collect and reuse it for event-related purposes.

From Deepesh's green notes

Replace plastic-based decor with flower-based arrangements that can be composted post-event

Use banana fibre strings instead of cotton or plastic strings for tying garlands, ensuring full compostability

Use paper lanterns instead of balloons for decorative purposes

Use cardboard instead of thermocol

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The work Deepesh and his associates (largely volunteers) undertake has to be underpinned by a deep personal commitment for it to be effective. That commitment is made and reinforced from time to time. Nilayaan conducts waste audits across industries and corporate spaces. One audit was carried out at an address extremely familiar to Deepesh. "At my own home, we conducted a waste audit and found that we had diverted 200 kg of organic waste in just 7-8 months. That realisation encouraged me to scale up the initiative," says Deepesh.

And Deepesh made his niece's first birthday as minimal-waste as possible, enunciating the right script for all her subsequent birthdays.

Vinod Venugopal and Reshma and (above) two of the inclusive music programmes organised by Samagratha.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A voice for differently abled singers

Musicians with disabilities do not find themselves on a level-playing field. Singers Vinod Venugopal and Reshma have launched Samagratha, a platform that provides these musicians with opportunities that might not otherwise come their way



LIFFY THOMAS

Over the last seven years, Sapna Soundarajan (now 25 years old) has shared the stage with acclaimed playback singers such as Late S.P. Balasubramaniam, K.S. Chithra, S.P. B. Charan and Unni Menon. That would make any singer's portfolio look hugely impressive. It is even more admirable when one considers the fact that Sapna is on the spectrum.

In Nilayaan, volunteers form the flywheel that drives the engine. Volunteer management is therefore of critical importance to Deepesh.

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Large-scale events require at least 18 volunteers to effectively manage waste, he begins and continues:

"Sourcing and training volunteers within a short time frame is difficult. Some attendees are resistant to sustainable practices and may discard waste irresponsibly. Events with over 1,000 attendees pose logistical challenges. Due to limited volunteers, only 60% of waste was managed at certain events, which was disheartening."

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ic performers whose income was affected on account of the pandemic.

"We used to judge various events and one particular event had the differently-abled also participating in it. We saw amazing talent there and wondered what can be done to ensure these budding musicians have sustained income," says Vinod, who along with

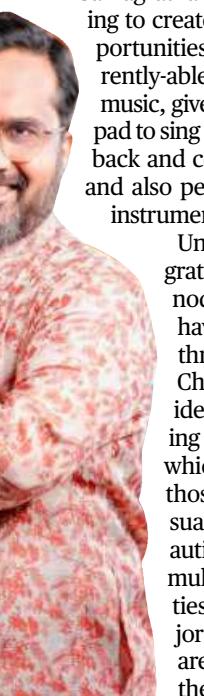
Reshma are jury members for Zee Tamil

Rehearsals are a must before a show so that they are on par with any other stage singer. We decide the upon the song based on their strength, fix the pitch of the song then make them practise over a couple of sessions before the show. The rehearsals are done with karaoke track," says Vinod, a resident of Anna Nagar.

Besides ticketed shows, Samagratha has been trying to create awareness at local events such as weddings and private functions on why the differently-abled should be offered stage for performance.

Sapna's father V. Soundarajan says more corporates should come forward to give differently abled musicians a chance. That would be a big push for such talent.

Music came naturally to Ashwath R, a 27-year-old on the spectrum with a post-graduate degree in Visual Communication. Thanks to Samagratha, he received a launch pad. "Music brings a lot of happiness to special needs children and they are really fast and good at grasping the nuances in every song. All that we want from the society is that these musicians be given equal opportunities," says Sheeba Sojanar, Ashwath's mother.



Under the Samagratha banner, Vinod and Reshma have organised three shows in Chennai, and identified 14 aspiring musicians which include those who are visually-challenged, autistic and with multiple disabilities. While a majority of the talent are from Chennai, the duo has also

spotted aspiring musicians from Coimbatore, Calcutta and Pune.

Bringing aspiring musicians down to Chennai before a show poses logistic challenges and that includes cost management. "Parents have to invest in music training, upgrading their wardrobe and other tools each one requires depending on the type of disability. We insist that these singers be paid," says Vinod.

The two spend time in identifying, training the talent and offering them a level-playing field at musical shows.

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Making professional courses more inclusive

LIFFY THOMAS

Braille is among the most common knowledge accessing tools for the visually challenged. Increasingly, accessible EPub (short for electronic publication) has made learning easier and instant. A visually impaired person only needs to slide his fingers on the mobile device to read the content or listen to it.

In Chennai, Karna Vidya Foundation, a non-profit that has been empowering the visually-challenged through technology, launched into this space in 2017 by providing school textbooks in an accessible format. The pandemic slowed down the Foundation's work in this space, but since 2023 they have been focussing on making textbooks more accessible where professional courses such as law, commerce and computer science are concerned. This initiative is also aimed at encouraging the visually impaired to opt for courses beyond English, Tamil and history (which are usually taken by the visually impaired) for higher education.

"We would have converted provided nearly 300 books in the EPub format since we launched into this space," says K. Raghuraman, who is honorary advisor of Karna Vidya Foundation and assistant professor in English at Government Arts College in Nandanam.

Adaptability makes EPub user-friendly.

If a visually impaired person wants to switch from EPub to Braille it can be done easily. If they want to hear it as an audio that is also possible. Likewise, they can opt for a magnified version of the book.

The Foundation has been able to convert books with the help of a team of volunteers, who are mainly parents of children with different disabilities trained for this purpose.

Raghuraman, who is visually challenged, says EPub is yet to catch up in a big way, and conversion of books requires time and effort. There are multiple processes to go through.

"The images, tables and rows, font, elements of the text and other dimensions of the page have to be considered while undertaking conversion into book format. In vernacular languages, it becomes even more challenging as they come with stylised fonts," says the professor. He says digitally accessible information system (DAISY) has brought accessibility to EPub.

To take this effort by Karna Vidya Foundation to a larger audience, the books are taken to Bookshare, an international online library for print disabled including those with dyslexia and learning disability.

"There is a quality check before the uploading of any book on this platform to check if it meets all accessibility norms. Anyone can get themselves registered by showing a medical certificate to get access to the books, and this is free for people in Asian countries," says the professor, adding that the book remains a permanent treasure.

The Foundation has been reaching out to institutions to popularise such learning content. It also takes requests from students on certain books that they want to read in an accessible format.

"When you make learning resources public and accessible then the community will grow. This is a gradual process where we need to train people for conversion but we are sure to see results in the long run," he says.

The Foundation wants more volunteers to help with converting which can be done from the comfort of one's home. Visit them at karnavidyafoundation.org.

Through a new initiative, Karna Vidya Foundation is adding to the already existing e-book content for the visually impaired



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

To make legal education accessible to all, a group of law school students have initiated a survey to identify gaps in the current system.

The Samavesh Project, as it is called, is an initiative under the Awaaz Leadership Labs, a non-profit based in New Delhi, with seven law school students representing different institutions collecting information from persons with disabilities (PWD) who have either appeared for the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT), All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) or aspire to appear for any of these examinations.

The exercise is aimed at collecting information, identifying gaps in the current system of law entrance examinations, make suggestions and propose model guidelines to relevant authorities, says a note.

"Those involved in making legislations that govern the nation must be representing diverse abilities. Once we are able to send stakeholders to the positions of law making, then the scenario will change," says Sushanth Gajula, a visually chal-

lenged law graduate who is part of the team.

The exercise is largely aimed at entry barriers for national level examinations. "CLAT, for instance, is not yet inclusive," says Sushanth. The team will be reaching out to various schools for sensitisation workshops.

They are also trying to build capacity among law schools. "Once we find some success in CLAT then we will push the agenda for other examinations," he says.

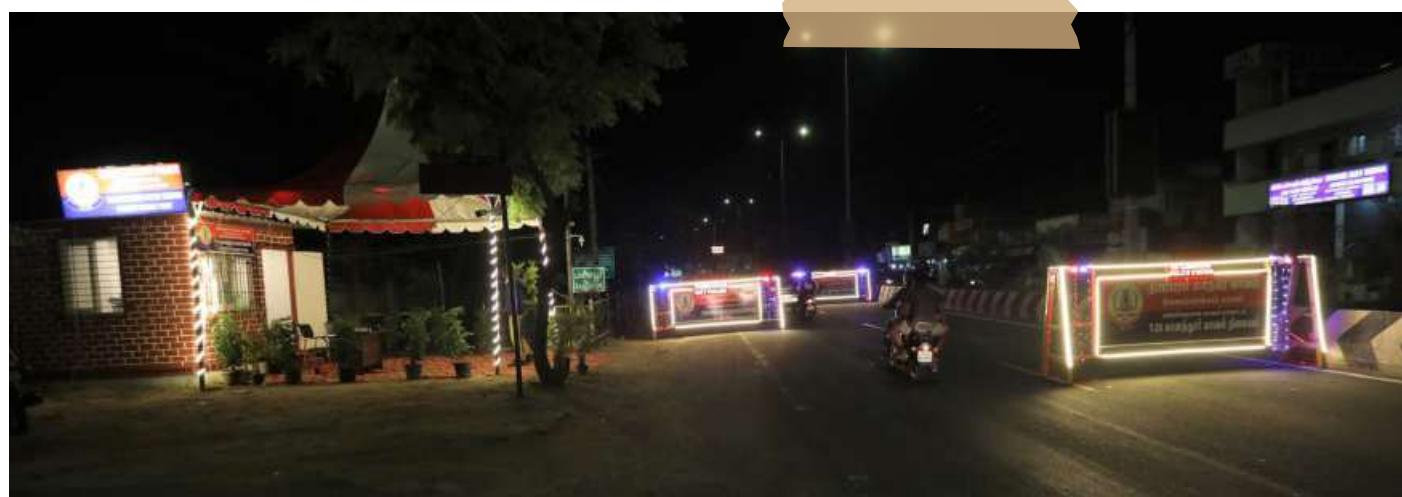
One challenge the project is faced with is getting across to students with disabilities.

Once they collect data, the team will be presenting it to the CLAT consortium.

"Many have special learning disabilities and are not comfortable in talking," says Sushanth. The team has also reached out to Lawctopus, a go-to platform for law students, to promote this initiative.

Awaaz Leadership Labs was founded by Rohit Sharma, a law graduate from National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata.

AI GENERATED IMAGE:
M ARIVARASU



Brightly lit barricades on ECR

To ensure motorists notice the barricades placed on a section of East Coast Road in Panaiyur where the T20 Kanathur police station (under the Tambaram city police commissionate) has a check post, the barricades have been extravagantly lit with LED lighting.

The image was taken on March 19, 2025.
Photo: Prince Frederick

Walkathon at Mantri Synergy



On a bright and cheerful morning, residents of Mantri Synergy came together for a walkathon event. The event saw an impressive turnout, with participants of all ages showing up. Participants, motivated by a shared commitment to wellness, walked through the picturesque surroundings of Mantri Synergy, creating an inspiring atmosphere throughout the morning, said a press release. The event not only highlighted the importance of staying active but also promoted a sense of unity and support within the community. Dr. Kamakshi Hospital's sponsorship played a pivotal role in making the event a reality, reinforcing their dedication to promoting health and well-being in the community. A special mention goes to the volunteers who made the event even more enjoyable.

Applications invited for ITI courses

Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) has invited applications from Industrial Training Institute (ITI) students (Mechanic Motor Vehicle, Mechanic Diesel, Electrician, Auto Electrician, Fitter, Turner, Painter, and Welder) for a one-year professional acquaintance in ITI. They would be given a stipend of ₹ 14,000 per month, said a release.

On April 2, MTC will conduct a special camp from 10 a.m. at the Industrial Training Institute, Chromepet, where students can apply for the one-year training.

World Storytelling Day events

To celebrate World Storytelling Day, Chennai Storytellers is conducting a host of events at Anna Centenary Library, Kotturpuram from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on March 23. The programmes are on the theme 'Deep Water' and open for all age groups.

The free workshops and performances will be mix of English and Tamil by different storytellers. The schedule includes: Workshop by Padmapriya Suresh at 10 a.m. followed by a performance by Vineetha/ Kausalya Pari.

A talk on Chennai Storytellers by Dr. Sheetal; performance by Soorya Gayatri; workshop in Tamil storytelling by Renu Mira and some talks. For details, call 98400 91290

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Water supply to be disrupted in three zones

The Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) has announced that localities in regions coming under its Zones 13 (Adyar), 14 (Perungudi) and 15 (Sholinganallur) would face disruption in water supply on March 23, 24, 25 and 26th.

The disruption is attributed to maintenance work in the 110 MLD seawater desalination plant at Nammel.

Areas in Thiruvanmiyur, Kottivakkam, Injambakkam, Neelankarai, Vettuvankeni, and Uthandi regions will face disruption on March 23 and 25.

Perungudi, Palavakkam, Karapakkam, Sholinganallur, and Okkiam - Thoraipakkam would have disruption on March 24 and 26. As a precaution, the residents must store enough water to meet their needs. In case of scarcity, people can opt for 'Dial For Water' (water tankers) on the CMWSSB website, <https://cmwssb.tn.gov.in/>

Further, in localities in regions where there is no water supply network or due to low pressure, CMWSSB will supply water through its tanks, added the press release issued by the CMWSSB.

'Redevelopment work at Guindy railway station to be completed by May'



Guindy railway station on March 20.

PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

Work under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is progressing at a good pace at Guindy railway station. According to a press release from the Southern Railway dated March 19, 2025, the work that is being carried out at a cost of ₹13.50 crore will be completed by May.

Work at the parking facility (950 square metres), installation of three lifts, new roofs for shelters (2400 square metres) are completed. Booking counter at GST Road entrance, pedestrian path and toilet construction are nearing completion, adds the press release.

This station classified as Suburban Grade - Two handles 68,000

passengers every day. Over 200 EMU/MEMU services stop at the station and 98 express trains pass through the station.

As part of the project, the aesthetics of the station's facade will be enhanced. The station's entrance will be redesigned with dedicated pathways for pedestrians and motorists. A pedestrian plaza, resurfacing the platform flooring, additional shelters and lights, installation of digital display boards, improved public announcement system, installation of high-resolution CCTV cameras are provided under the scheme, adds the release.

Metro services for IPL matches

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) will be running additional services for cricket fans attending the IPL matches at M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk. CMRL will extend metro train services on all Chennai Super Kings match days, ensuring safe and convenient transportation for fans, says a press release.

Additionally, valid IPL match ticket holders will be eligible for a sponsored round trip metro journey between any CMRL metro station and Government Estate Metro Station, the metro station closest to the stadium. This initiative aims to reduce traffic congestion and promote the use of public transport. On match days, metro operations will be extended by up to 90 minutes post the match or until 1 a.m., whichever is earlier, based on commuters' demand. CMRL will announce the last train times before each match day, added the release issued by CMRL.

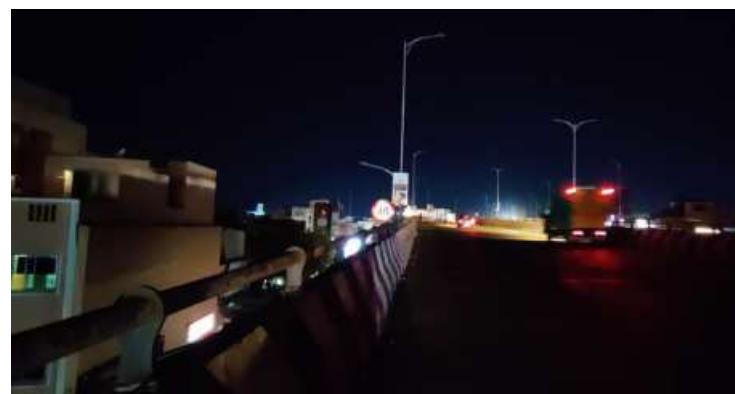
Street in Perumbakkam plunged in darkness



Poorly lit Nesamani Nagar Second Street in Perumbakkam. Residents complain that street lights are not working for more than a week. The image was taken on March 21. PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN

READERS WRITE

'Unsafe drive on Medavakkam flyover'



Lamps on both sides of Medavakkam flyover are not functional for some time now. It is difficult to drive even with the headlights on.

R V Baskaran
Selaiyur

'Travel as you please' in AC buses



The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) has launched a new 'Travel As You Please' monthly pass.

Priced at ₹ 2,000, the pass allows commuters to travel in air-conditioned, deluxe, express and whiteboard buses for a month. There is no travel limit for the pass.

The pass is available at renewal centres at terminuses, according to a release issued by the MTC.

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.

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