



metroPLUS

THE HINDU

Discover the story of how India was mapped triangle by triangle **P2**

GENELIA ON THE MAGIC OF CINEMA **P4**



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There is something about the high you experience, watching an edge-of-the-seat victory in a sports movie on the big screen. Closer home however, the sands of Besant Nagar beach that has several teams come together to play Ultimate Frisbee through the year has an inspiring, and almost equally cinematic story to tell.

At the TRIO Invitational Tournament 2025 held in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year, Flywild, one of Chennai's most promising Ultimate Frisbee clubs clinched the gold, becoming the first club team from India to win an international tournament. Facing off players from different countries including Indonesia, China, Japan, Thailand, and USA, Flywild played a well-fought final against the team from the Philippines and emerged victorious, in what was also the club's first international tournament participation.

Sedric Emmanuel, the team's captain, says they initially lost two matches and won one, which meant their fourth match was to decide if they would make it to the quarter-finals. "While we play with no pressure back home in Chennai, this was a lot more challenging. We motivated each other as a team and got through," he says. Once they were in the quarter-finals, their winning streak continued.

The tournament was a culmination of four months of practice, and special camps.

"This was the first international travel experience for many other members," says Siva Raman, who coached the team and topped the stats board in the tourney as the player with the most goals and assists. "We took this as a challenge, and decided to create history for Ultimate in India," he adds.

Paul Pradeep, founder of Puyal, an Ultimate club in Chennai who was also Flywild's manager for the TRIO tournament says that many players who take to



Discs that soar Flywild (in pink) at the TRIO Invitational Tournament 2025. KANG KIT

We are the champions

Flywild, one of Chennai's top Ultimate Frisbee clubs, becomes the first Indian club team to win an international tournament. We meet the inspiring athletes behind this feat

playing Ultimate in Chennai, and some who went on this tournament came from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Team captain Sedric who is 23-years-old was job-hunting in the run-up to the tournament, and had also suffered a significant financial setback. "For the TRIO invitational, the Ultimate community and my team helped me secure funds. We are a family, a team of brothers," says the player, whose father is an auto driver.

The sight of grown-up 'annas' diving into the sand, and throwing around a disc

nearly 14 years ago is something Akash Palani still cannot forget.

The Ultimate community came together to fund and help him complete his college education, to become a physical education trainer. "I learnt at a young age what 'spirit of the game' means thanks to Ultimate, and this has guided my life throughout," says the 24-year-old player. His teammate and a gymnastics coach, P Neelakandan says that being introduced to the sport at a young age immensely helped him with exposure. "I feel that since we

do not play for money, we do not fight, and stick together," he adds.

Given that Ultimate thrives on a sport played for passion across the country, many players juggle full-time jobs and make it to practice sessions through the week. S Santhosh, who works as a delivery representative with Swiggy says he finishes his work shifts from 7am to 6pm, and then heads to practice, which goes on till 10pm.

According to Ben Ong, tournament director, winning ahead of the usual Asian powerhouses that are Japan, the Philippines and Singapore

Meet the masters

The sun is beating down on Besant Nagar beach, and while people are choosing to sit or stand under the trees nearby, a group of women is hard at work – deftly passing a frisbee, and sprinting across the sand.

This all-women team, the Team India Masters Women, has players from different cities including Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Kochi, Mumbai and Chennai, who have come together for their monthly camp in Chennai in the run-up to the World Beach Ultimate Championships (WBUC) in Portimão, Portugal, from November 16 to 22.

"This is the first time that India is sending an all-women team in the Masters category for an international tournament. In the women's Masters category, all players have to be above the age of 30, and we have players between the ages of 30 and 50 years," says Smithi Manickam, team coach.

Smithi, says their focus is on creating a strong statement at the world championships. "It is also important that the players have a great campaign overall. Many of our women players have a host of responsibilities, including careers and families, and they are juggling all of this with their love for the sport," she says.



Who run the world Team India Masters Women during a practice session in Chennai. R. RAVINDRAN

What's for lunch today?

Hotel Sangeetha opened in 1985 at Parry's. This month, it celebrates its 40-year-anniversary with a hearty meal and retro prices

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What connects MS Subbalakshmi, KJ Yesudas and a popular Chennai vegetarian eatery?

The answer is Sangeetha, one of Chennai's iconic vegetarian brands that has completed 40 years in the food business. With 34 branches in Chennai and 23 abroad currently, Sangeetha has braved competition and inflation to enjoy continued patronage among the city's foodies.

Known for its hot, crisp masala dosas and meals, Sangeetha's journey started small in Armenian Street, Parry's, where P Suresh set shop.

His father, Padmanabha Pothi, had had considerable experience in the restaurant business, having run hotels in Thiruvananthapuram and later in Chennai's West Mambalam

(Hotel Suprabath) and Broadway (Hotel Swathi).

Suresh's dream was to become a photographer but the hotel business that his father was passionate about kept drawing him. Their 1985 outing at Parry's was named Sangeetha (which means 'music'), as a hat-tip to legendary singers MS Subbulakshmi and KJ Yesudas. "These singers gave so many people peace of mind with their voices. We wanted to do the same through our food offerings," says Suresh, who subsequently became closely associated with the founder of Saravana Bhavan, P Rajagopal (known as Annachi), whom he considers one of his gurus.

Suresh, whose day is filled with meetings and inspections at various branches, is a foodie himself. "I have travelled the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu and eaten in various places. Kathiravan's Hotel in



Srivilliputhur is a personal favourite; it serves three types of *sambar*. I also fondly remember the times eating butter dosas late at night at a small hotel near a provisions market in Salem."

In Chennai, he is a regular visitor to Pondy Bazaar's Shri Balaajee Bhavan for its onion *rava dosa* and Rayar's Mess for its unique chutney.

Fan for life

For many Chennaiites, meals during lunchtime is most satisfying. At



Food for thought Sangeetha restaurant's P Suresh with his daughter, Sanjana Suresh. AKHILA EASWARAN

Chennai's Sangeetha, they are priced only at ₹40, till July 24. This limited meals, which also includes a special vada and sweet apart from regular lunch offerings, will be on from 11am to 4pm at select outlets on select dates.

This has seen a lot of patronage; the Parry's branch saw more than 2,000 walk-ins for this offer on the first day. While the meals might be sought-after this season, there are a few people – like TV personality and actor, Bosskey – for whom this hotel has been an everyday haunt

for the past three years. Every day, at 10am and 6pm, you can find him at the RA Puram branch of Sangeetha – sharing a laugh with a group of friends, some of whom he would have made just that day. "My breakfast is a combination of pongal, dosa, coffee and laughter," says Bosskey, who is friends with everyone at the branch, from the manager to the support staff. He jokes, "Thanks to my daily visits to the hotel, I may soon be entitled to an award for my association with Sangeetha, titled 'Sangeetha....Gallaa Nidhi!'."

For people like Bosskey and many other Chennaiites, Sangeetha is more than a hotel. It is an emotion. And that's exactly what the folks running the restaurant intend to be grateful for, as they turn 40. "This (the ₹40 offer) is not about making money. It is about celebration. It is about giving back to the people of Chennai who have given us so much love over the years," says P Suresh, who runs Sangeetha along with his daughter Sanjana Suresh, P Rajagopal and Anirudh Rajagopal.

The ₹40 limited meals offer is on till July 24 at various branches. (July 17 at Santhome, Urappakkam, and Egmore).

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Chennai, then Madras, 1819. Syed Mir Mohsin Husain, a jeweller from Arcot, was working in the store of his employer, George Gordon, when British military officials stopped by with a strange instrument, asking if Mohsin could fix it. Though he had never seen such an instrument before, he managed to repair it, a skill noted by one of the officers, Valentine Blacker, who went on to turn to Mohsin regularly for help after that. He even appointed him as an instrument maker at the Surveyor-General's office when he (Blacker) became the Surveyor-General of India in 1823, states a new book titled *India in Triangles: The incredible story of how India was mapped and the Himalayas measured* by Shruthi Rao and Meera Iyer, published by Puffin.

Meera loves the story of Mohsin, this small-town jeweller, who went on to play a crucial role in the Great Trigonometric Survey (GTS). "I wish more people knew about Mohsin," says the Bengaluru-based writer and researcher. There are other, equally compelling personalities in the book, which tells the story of how the Indian subcontinent was mapped. These include William Lambton, who kick-started the project; his successors, George Everest, Andrew Scott Waugh and James Walker; and Radhanath Sikdar, the Indian mathematician who calculated the height of Mount Everest.

India in Triangles is also about mathematical principles, instruments, and the methodology used to survey this vast land with its complex topography. Additionally, it discusses its major outcomes – including improved maps, a deeper understanding of the Earth's curvature, and confirmation that Mount Everest is the world's tallest mountain – and is packed with engaging exercises, trivia, anecdotes, and facts. Shruthi reveals one of them: "There is no evidence that Everest ever saw the mountain



Mapping a nation

A new book titled *India in Triangles: The incredible story of how India was mapped and the Himalayas measured* by Shruthi Rao and Meera Iyer tells the story of the people, instruments and outcomes of the Great Trigonometric Survey

named after him," says the California-based children's writer and editor.

The start of a survey
The pilot for this great survey was conducted in Banaswadi, Bengaluru, in 1800, a year after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. Lambton, who was part of the British regiment that fought this war, had proposed this survey for two broad reasons, explains Meera. The first was that the East India Company, which was rapidly acquiring new territories, needed maps. Additionally, the geographer in Lambton sought to measure the Earth's true shape, fulfilling his long-held desire to contribute to the field of geodesy. The GTS was based on

India in measure (Clockwise from top) A view of Mount Everest; William Lambton; Meera Iyer; Shruthi Rao. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND AFP



the principle of triangulation, a process that divides a shape or surface into multiple triangles, creating a network of triangles across India through which they were able to map the entire country. The actual process was arduous, involving the lugging of heavy equipment through harsh, often hostile terrain, while constantly battling the elements. "They expected it to take around five years," says Meera. In reality, the GTS, which officially began in April 1802 in Madras, took over 70, with the leadership baton being passed on from Lambton to Everest, Waugh and finally to Walker. The impressive legacy that the GTS has left behind, still lingers two centuries later. Not only are all Government-made maps of India, since the 1830s, been based on one of the outcomes of this survey, it is

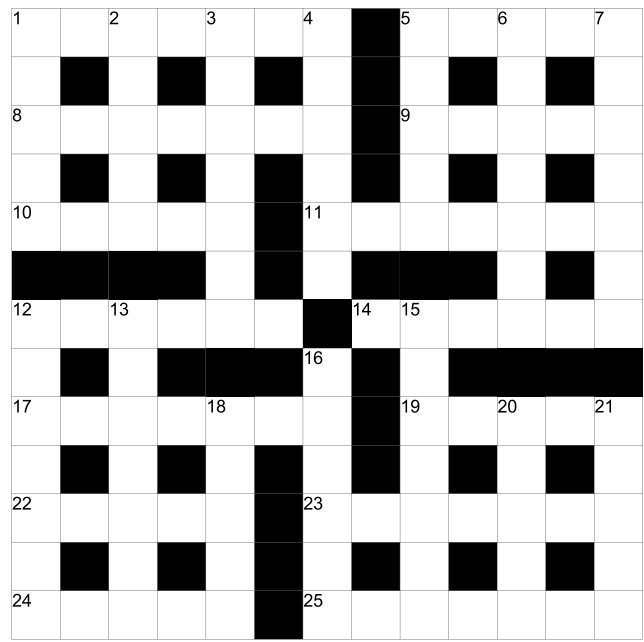
also useful for people trying to understand the Earth's tectonic shifts, states the book.

Writing a book
When Shruthi went on a holiday to Mussoorie in 2014, she visited George Everest's house, located in Hathipaon. "I did some research and heard about the Great Trigonometric Survey for the first time," she says. "It has been running in my head since that time, and I wanted to write it for children," she says.



When she started researching for the book online, she discovered that Meera's byline recurred in many of the articles about the same survey so she asked her to co-author the book, explains Shruthi. Since the book is aimed at younger readers, the authors made sure that it was as conversational and simple as possible, says Shruthi. "We also put in activities for children to help them get a feel of things." And it isn't just children who are buying the book; adults seem to be enjoying it too. "I think, compared to my other books for children, we are getting a lot of adult interest because very few people know about this," says Shruthi. "But, they're fascinated by the topic."

METROPLUS QUICK CROSSWORD #12
(By Doppelganger)



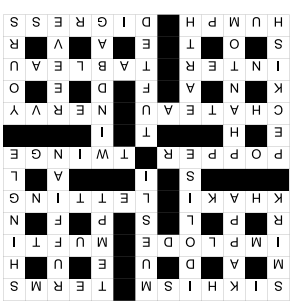
ACROSS

- 1 Religion established in 15th Century (7)
- 5 Divisions of school year (5)
- 8 To collapse inwards suddenly (7)
- 9 Clothing of policeman on leave (5)
- 10 Military uniform cloth (5)
- 11 Putting out on rent (7)
- 12 Popcorn is made in this (6)
- 14 Sudden, shooting pain (6)
- 17 Napoleon's house (7)
- 19 Students get ____ before exams (5)
- 22 They ____ a Pope after he passes on (5)
- 23 One can see this on 26th January (7)
- 24 Dissatisfied expression (5)
- 25 Depart from main topic (7)

To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.



Solution No. 12



Prajwal Parajuly

The Kapaleeshwarar temple, which I refer to as Kapali because locals call it that, isn't the most beautiful temple in the world. But I feel more at peace here than I do at any other place of worship.

Kapali is one of my stops on every trip to Chennai. I only have to step into traffic-clogged Mylapore, with its bylanes of chaos and colour, to be swept up in holy frenzy. I spot from the alleys, amidst a tangle of wires, the temple's multi-hued entrance-tower reach for the sky. Before I make my way in, I leave behind competing fragrances from oleander, chrysanthemum and jasmine garlands, and release my flip-flops into a sea of footwear. I know I don't frequent Kapali just for the carvings, intricate and bursting with stories, or for the offerings, to eat fistfuls of which I sometimes queue twice. There's something more.

I was brought up in a Hindu family, next to a Protestant church and went to a Bahai school, followed by a school whose leanings were Buddhist. There was, therefore, some serious confusion growing up. At Sunday school, which we went to because the pastor was our closest neighbour in the Himalayan town of Gangtok, we were taught there was only one God. But then I'd go home to my cobweb-addled family altar with its many-limbed gods and goddesses and wonder if the Sunday school teacher was lying. How disapproving the family priest was when he discovered that my parents allowed – even encouraged – us to go to church. Added to this mix was a lot of Buddhist talk, simplistically distilled into something about life being

SOUTHERN LIVING

Temple of thought

Author Prajwal Parajuly goes in search of God, gets distracted by a rooster, and finds unexpected peace in Mylapore

suffering.

When a plethora of religions is foisted on you as a kid, you become a lifelong spirituality enthusiast. So, yes, I walk the Camino de Santiago, the 900-kilometre Catholic pilgrimage across Spain, and hike up to the Paro Taksang in Bhutan. I regret not having done the Kumano Kodo while in Japan. I have contemplated fasting for Ramadan but am nervous it will be seen as gimmicky. I want to go on a Kailash-Mansarovar trip because it looks soul-cleansing. Do I attempt these pilgrimages for absolution? I still don't know. I understand that a majority of these spiritual experiences entail copious hiking and have often wondered if I crave them because there's walking involved.

Unfortunately, I seldom find this quest for spirituality fulfilled in famous places of worship. It evaded me all three times at the Jagannath temple in Puri and in the crowds of the Somnath in Gujarat. I frantically hunted for it at the Santiago de Compostela as I did at the Vatican. I am envious of you if you feel a certain energy at dargahs and mosques. I want to be you when you claim a calm



descends on you at the Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu. I tried feeling at one with God at the Kamakhya in Guwahati but failed. Neither the Meenakshi temple at Madurai nor the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram did much. When I didn't find spirituality, whatever that means, at the Golden Temple – what wretched human isn't moved by the Golden Temple? – I abandoned rustling up a relationship with God via man-made structures.

That is why my being in thrall of Kapali from the get-go astounded me. I am certain I don't frequent the temple for the aesthetics. Like many houses of worship, it has history, but it's not history I am here for. Nor the quiet, which you will only find if your visit coincides with the

sun being at its zenith on a working day. The temple is laidback. You can wear what you want. No priest solicits you for donations or looks at you with desperation. No one asks for your caste, your sub-caste, your sub-sub-sub-caste and your gotra. (Many proud South Indians are quick to point out the South-North dichotomy here and claim that this is normal at most South Indian temples, but I don't feel as positive in all these other temples as I do at Kapali, so Kapali wins).

I like the hilarious rooster that catwalks down the stage at the most opportune moments. And the cat that tries to unsuccessfully bully the rooster. I like the white *vibuthi* a priest plasters on my forehead. I like the rose-and-vilva-leaf garland I am offered. I like the concerts even if I understand nothing. I like my circumambulations, if I can call shuffling from one bare foot to another on the temple's scorching floors that. Every time I come here, my mind stills. Every time I am here, I feel grateful.

The older I get, the more jaded I become with organised religion – all organised religions. So much evil happens in the name of God, so much polarisation. I am happy (and stunned) that a temple – this bastion of organised religion – helps alleviate the cynicism somewhat. I have decided to embrace that for now and not allow any form of overthinking to get in the way of Kapali and me.

Prajwal Parajuly is the author of The Gorkha's Daughter and Land Where I Flee. He loves idli, loathes naan, and is indifferent to coffee. He teaches Creative Writing at Krea University and oscillates between New York City and Sri City.

STEP OUT

Harmony for a historic landmark



St Andrew's Church, fondly known as The Kirk, will present A Concert of Anthems & Concertos, as part of its ongoing church restoration project. The event brings together the Madras Musical Association Choir and the MMA String Orchestra, under the leadership of Eshvita Menezes, in a performance that celebrates the enduring traditions of choral and orchestral music. Conducted by Augustine Paul and Ebenezer Arunkumar, and accompanied by Jeremiah Christopher on organ and piano, the concert promises a stirring programme of sacred and classical works. The evening will also feature a guest performance by the Shatabdi Express Trio. Proceeds from the offertory will go towards the church restoration fund. @ The Kirk, Egmore, on July 19 at 6.30pm. The event is free and open to all.

Echoes of tradition



Chennai-based designer Sujata Pai, founder of the sustainable fashion label Ambi by Sujata Pai, is bringing together a select group of like-minded brands for a two-day pop-up, dedicated to celebrating India's rich heritage of handcrafts and conscious fashion. This intimate group show will feature 10 sustainable brands from Ahmedabad, Chennai, and Kolkata, each with a shared commitment to authentic, artisan-led craftsmanship. On display will be a curated collection of handwovens, ajrak, Indian block prints, and eco-friendly products, all aligned in their philosophy of promoting slow fashion and supporting India's heritage crafts. The event focusses on craftsmanship, heritage, and the values of sustainability. @The Folly, Amethyst, Royapettah. July 22 and 23. 10.30am to 7.30pm. For details, call 9384857558.

Soulful sounds



The Nook, the multifunctional space for live music and workshops, presents the very first edition of Roots and Reverb: Neo Soul Nights. Roots and Reverb is a concert series curated by The Nook, celebrating artistes and sounds that keep it deep, smooth, and honest. If you vibe with the sounds of Erykah Badu, D'Angelo, Hiatus Kaiyote and others in that soulful, groovy universe, this is where you need to be. On July 20, 6.30pm. For tickets, head to @the_nook_chennai on Instagram.



Bao buns by the beach (Left) The steak; (below) a kimchi cocktail; (inset) and a ramen bowl at Fifth. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



month ago, has come up in Palavakkam at a time of an immense hospitality boom in the area. With restaurants like Bask, Origami and Paris Plage packing crowds on the weekend, it is evident that people are keen to drive out, eat a good meal and sip on a drink, with or without the alcohol, and catch the breeze.

Aishwarya Selvaraj, a dermatologist whose content is fairly popular on Instagram, has always enjoyed food, particularly meat. The doctor-entrepreneur had earlier begun L'amour, a dessert studio in Nungambakkam, but shut the venture down last year. She and her husband wanted to continue being in the business and realised that the ECR was seeing a rise in visitors, which is when Fifth was born. Along with Rajesh Kumar, principal consultant, the trio worked their way through several tasting menus to finalise their selection. Rajesh says that they have prepared their own concentrates, sherberts and mixes for



Fifth is at 21, MGR Salai, F Beach Road, Palavakkam. A meal for two costs ₹3,000. Call 9008245684 for details.

A high steaks affair

Chennai's criminally under-utilised shoreline is now seeing a host of restaurants popping up by the sea. Fifth is one such

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Have you heard of this idea of de-centering romance? A host of young millennials and Gen Z are done trying to build lives around their lovers. Dating is expensive in this economy. The youth would rather build friendships where they can just be, while spending their finite disposable income on an end-of-the-week treat for themselves. I, for one, have de-centered romance and have instead decided to focus all my energies on finding the perfect bite of steak. It is all the meat-cute I need.

At the culmination of this new adventurous dating journey between meat and I, is Fifth on Palavakkam. The bar-cum-restaurant overlooking the sea, is quite easily one of the most romantic spots in the city. The final table, offering a view of the glistening ocean right by the swimming pool of what was originally a villa on this once-rarely frequented stretch, is likely to be the spot where anxious partners profess their love with rings. I am here, ready to acquaint myself with a gorgeous rib-eye cut of imported wagyu. Fifth, which opened a

drinks that they hope add to the menu once their alcohol license is approved.

For now though, the light shines on the food. We begin with a host of appetisers including grilled gongura prawns, Seoul fried wings, gochujang soft shell crab, betel leaf beef, Punjabi chole hummus and avocado thokku.

The chole is creamed, then served with an oozing burrata topped with spicy chilli oil, and tiny methi khakras. Although the last sentence is a handful to type, the dish in itself is not a mouthful, making it an addictive snack. The prawns, in a mild butter sauce, topped with bits of burnt garlic, with a whiff of the smell of the ocean from the table, makes for a perfect bite. The same however, cannot be said of the soft-shell crab which is unfortunately covered is a sweet-sauce akin to gochujang but mostly tastes of fried oil.

Three appetisers stand out – their duck pastrami with sliced duck encased in a soft bao bun; the tender meat wrapped in a neat, contrasting beetle leaf; and the humble mango chunda with bits of brie, atop well-buttered sourdough. Although a bowl full of fluffy white rice appears alongside a fragrant Kerala-style coconut milk-based prawn mappas curry, I pace myself because I know what is next.

Served on a cutting board with a selection of chimichurri, house jus, mashed potatoes and flaky Maldon sea salt, the wagyu rib-eye is meant to be eaten by cutting through the meat using a curated selection of knives made from various Indian wood. I chose the rosewood knife and cut through the beef. Buttery and indulgent, this cut of steak imported from Dubai, has the perfect char and an elevated depth thanks to the Santa Maria grill. Rajesh says that they have been booked out through the week and this steak has been in high demand. It is easy to understand why.

The meal ends with a gulab jamun in an Old Monk caramel. Since it is a tad too sweet, I keep the dish aside and lock eyes with what I originally came for.

Let romance be de-centered. Let it even perish. I'm alright. I have steak.

Art beyond words

A panel discussion on using sign language and the need for greater inclusivity in the arts



Tune in (From left) Srivatsan Sankaran, Swetha Kulkarni, Dhinesh RP, and Haseena S. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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The recently concluded photography and art exhibition, Anaivarum – Echoes of Heritage: A Celebration of Past and Inclusivity, by Madras Photo Bloggers, and jointly organised by the British Council, Nam Veedu Nam Oor Nam Kadhai, and the Madras Literary Society, held a panel discussion titled Sign Language as Art, focussing on the importance of using sign language and the need for greater inclusivity in the arts.

The panel featured deaf artist Swetha Kulkarni (artist and photographer), Haseena S (deaf stage performer), and Dhinesh RP (deaf filmmaker), who shared their experiences and the importance of representing deaf voices and perspectives. The discussion was moderated by Srivatsan Sankaran, founder of Madras Photo Bloggers and the Deaf Artist NFT Collective. The entire sign language programme was being interpreted by Roja A and Nithya Giri.

Swetha spoke on the importance of empowerment and positivity through her work, "I don't feel negative when someone gives me a negative comment, I feel it encourages me to do even better."

Haseena shared how she uses sign language, body language and facial expressions to convey emotion in her performances, "From childhood, I have been practising the songs by using the sign language in front of the

mirror. I know that this song is something which everyone enjoys. So, I want even a deaf person to enjoy and have the same feeling," says Haseena.

"I have been focussing on different stories, and converting them into sign language is how I want to support the community," says Dhinesh while talking about the strength and creative skills of the deaf community.

Dhinesh also pointed out the lack of awareness and accessibility in the film industry. As a solution, he suggested greater on-screen visibility for sign language interpreters, highlighting the need for more balanced representation, proposing a 50/50 screen presence alongside hearing actors, rather than the current imbalance where hearing individuals dominate.

The panellists elucidated on the difference between Indian Sign Language (ISL), British Sign Language (BSL), and American Sign Language (ASL), which are not mutually intelligible. Even though there is a mutual sign language used during specific times, like airline safety, most communication relies on country-specific sign language.

"This event embodies our commitment to championing inclusion, expanding access, and making our libraries vibrant, welcoming spaces," said Viji Thiagarajan, director, Libraries South Asia, British Council.

The event was presented with media support from The Hindu's Made of Chennai initiative

Kolkata comes calling

6 Ballygunge Place, the storied Bengali restaurant, arrives at Park Hyatt with a menu that honours home kitchens and forgotten recipes



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When a Bengali invites you home for a meal, it is never just about food, but about storytelling, mustard, memory, a colonial mishmash and an inherited love for the kitchen. Few restaurants capture that sentiment with finesse and depth, and 6 Ballygunge Place, a Kolkata institution, is among the pioneers that have made it possible. This week, it is serving a slice of culture in Chennai.

At a pop-up hosted by Park Hyatt Chennai's Park Brasserie, the restaurant is introducing its meticulously researched,

time-honoured Bengali dishes to a new audience.

At the helm of this pop-up is Chef Sushanta Sengupta, who co-founded 6 Ballygunge Place in 2003 with the vision of bringing Bengali cuisine out of the home and into the world of fine dining. "From the inception of our restaurant, we always felt like Bengalis will never eat Bengali food outside their home. But times are changing culturally partly because these dishes are not getting made at home anymore. The

A culinary bridge Luchi with aloo dum and cholar dal; chingri malai curry; and aamrapur shorbot. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

generation before us who were involved in the kitchen, are slowly giving up, and the new generation is not able to keep up," he says.

At Park Brasserie, the team stays true to their Kolkata flagship.

The first course is a basket of luchi, served with a

flavourful bhaja masala aloo dum, and an unassuming cholar dal, which is sweet and savoury in equal measure. A raw green chilli and a slice of Gondhoraj lemon adds oomph to each bite. The table is then laden with steaming rice, and bhortas – a til badamer bhorta made with sesame and peanuts, and a chingri (prawn) bhorta, both slicked with a pungent mustard oil, and best eaten with your hands. "These bhortas are very rustic and not all Bengali homes make it, but we picked it up from some districts. It is like a Bengali version of podi that you mix with rice and ghee in the South," says Chef Sushanta.

The main course continues with a silken chingri malai curry, made with coconut milk, (a nod, the chef says to Southeast Asian influence on Bengal's coastline). It is paired with basanti pulao, and kosha mangsho, a slow-cooked mutton in a thick, dark gravy. Vegetarian options

include delicate chandar kalia, chenna (ricotta) dumplings in a similar coconut milk curry and mochar paturi, banana flower, mustard and coconut, wrapped in banana leaf and grilled.

The meal closes on a sweet note, as all Bengali meals must. The indrani, mini rosogollas served in a thick creamy rabri, is topped with crunchy chopped nuts. Also try the festive nolen gur ice cream, infused with Bengal's beloved winter jaggery.

At a time when regional cuisine is increasingly finding pride of place on India's fine-dining map, 6 Ballygunge Place's visit to Chennai feels like a moment of culinary diplomacy – a cultural bridge laid gently, course by course.

Park Brasserie at Park Hyatt Chennai is hosting the pop-up by 6 Ballygunge Place from July 16 to 20. A meal for two costs ₹1,350. For reservations call 8939871440.



Muralikrishnan on drums, Shankar, Varun and Hari on keyboards, and Nigel on the bass guitar. Expect a seamless mix of classical and contemporary sounds on this musical evening. @TAG Auditorium, Mylapore. July 18, 6.45pm onwards. For tickets, call 9840046827.



Unspoken grief

Poochu presents the play *I Hate This*, written by David Hansen. The play is a moving account of one man's journey through grief following the sudden loss of his child to preclampsia. Told with honesty and

quiet heartbreak, the play explores the unspoken weight of mourning, guilt, and the long road to acceptance. Directed by Denver Anthony Nicholas, featuring TM Karthik and Abinaya R. @Alliance Française, Nungambakkam. July 19, 4pm and 7pm. Tickets at [allevents.in](#).



No rules, just vibes

At Bun Butter JAM, you can paint, strum, scribble or just stare at the wall, while you sip and chill. This art and anything jam offers a relaxed, come-as-you-are gathering where you can enjoy the vibe. Bring your own tools or just show up and soak it in. This is just a space to unwind and create if you feel like it. @Davrah Coffee, Alwarpet. July 19, 4pm to 7pm. For details, call 9176465151.



The arts come alive
It's time to celebrate public arts. Chennai's *Mixtura Vizha*, in its fourth edition, seeks to do exactly that. Audiences are invited to witness a vibrant mix of music, dance, theatre, and visual storytelling across three iconic public venues. Nine artistes and ensembles will perform simultaneously across the venues — but with a twist: the performance schedule is a surprise.

Attendees are encouraged to come with an open mind. Featured artistes include Adam Greig (Western classical piano performance), Adityanarayan (Carnatic music), Brass Ensemble from the Sunshine Orchestra (Instrumental music), Charumathi Chandrasekar (Bharatanatyam), KS Thejal, a Tamil medley and dance fusion, Thilagavathi Palani (Kattaiakuthu) and Thedal Arts Theatre (Tamil play). Presented by SNS Arts Development Consultancy in collaboration with KM Music Conservatory, Chennai Metro Rail Limited, Greater Chennai Corporation, and The Glassbox, this year's edition reaffirms the festival's values of accessibility and artistic innovation. *Entry is free for the events, to be held at Thiru Vi Ka Park (Shenoy Nagar), Central Station and Urban Square (Kathipara Junction) from 5pm to 7.30pm, July 18.*



The way forward

Tamil cinema is spreading its wings. At the recently-held FeTNA International Film Festival (FeIFF), held earlier this month in Raleigh, North Carolina, 65 short films and 12 feature films were showcased. The highlights of the fest included a documentary on Veerappan, followed by a rare conversation with Nakkheeran Gopal, and *Kolzhippannayin Chelladurai* by Seenu Ramasamy. Apart from screenings, the festival also included sessions by directors Rajkumar Periasamy (*Amaran*) and Mari Selvaraj (*Vaazhai*), who discussed the various facets behind their projects. Conceived by the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA), the film festival hopes to be a blueprint for Tamil cinema's prospects in the future. Next year's edition hopes to include a Kids Film section and a film market, among other things.

A new voice

Malayalam rapper and songwriter Hirandas Murali, popularly known as Vedan, is set to make his Tamil cinema debut in director Vijay Milton's upcoming Tamil-Telugu bilingual, tentatively titled *Production No. 5*. The film, produced by Rough Note Production, features Telugu actor Raj Tarun in the lead. Vedan, known for his politically charged and socially conscious music, rose to prominence with his debut track 'Voice of the Voiceless' in 2020. His work often addresses issues of caste, class, and marginalisation, and he has become a notable voice in Malayalam independent music. In 2024, his song 'Kuthanthram' from *Manjummel Boys* brought him mainstream recognition, accumulating over 50 million streams. The yet-untitled film, currently in its dubbing stage, also stars Ammu Abhirami, Bharath, Sunil, and Aari Arjunan.



Genelia Deshmukh, who returns to Telugu cinema after 13 years with *Junior*, chats about her memorable films

this nervous energy that made me learn. I did not know the film language, had no idea what 'cut', 'take' or 'retake' meant.

Q: You would also listen to story narrations in the preferred language of the writer/director. How did you resonate with their narration, considering you weren't familiar with Telugu or Tamil initially?

A: I am not a linguistic person but I would pay attention and listen to understand the emotions. A few people would explain in English to make me feel comfortable. I'd tell them that they can narrate in their preferred language and I will get the vibe. I also took the effort to learn my lines in Telugu and Tamil. For instance, I learnt two pages of dialogues for a scene in *Bommarillu*. I preferred it that way. I would never take the shortcut of saying 1,2,3,4,5... for the lip movements.

Q: You worked in Shankar's *Boys* and simultaneously did *Satyam* in Telugu, a relatively smaller film that also did well. Did you make those decisions or did you have someone who could be a sounding board?

A: I took the decisions, mostly. If I was lost, I would turn to Riteish.

People did not know back then that we were dating. He had a much better understanding of cinema. I would primarily credit the directors and producers for casting me in such different characters and the audiences for accepting me. I have worked with stars and newcomers and treated my work with respect. Even today, I don't like to use the word 'fans'. I prefer well-wishers or audiences.

Q: What made you take up *Junior* after all these years?

A: I have a bucket list of characters that I want to portray and this character of a boss woman character is one of them. It is a drama between a father and son (V Ravichandran and Kireeti), and I play a strong character; there is power play. When Radhakrishna narrated the story, I was surprised that he chose me. At the time, I was at home, not looking for work or auditioning. I've never done a dual language film and loved the process of filming both in Telugu and Kannada. I have a full-fledged, well etched out character. It is so tough for female actors to get such characters.

Q: After working 15-16 hours a day for several years, you took a sabbatical for a decade. Did you face withdrawal symptoms even though you enjoyed a new phase of life with marriage and motherhood?

A: I loved and still love acting, but the fame... not so much. I stepped back from acting but I became an entrepreneur and a producer, made mistakes and learnt. That experience helped me portray my character in *Junior* without making it appear caricaturish. Even in *Sitaare Zameen Par*, I could understand the emotions of my character — of a wife who wants to have a child, the marital tussles and egos... Life experiences can enrich the portrayal of such character.



Question: You were very young when you debuted in cinema. Did you grasp the enormity of the change it ushered into your life?

Answer: Cinema chose me, rather than the other way around. I had done an ad film, was spotted outside my college and chosen for a film. I came in like a curious kid in a candy store. I have always had

Tryst with films Genelia; and in a still from *Junior*, starring Kireeti and Sreelala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Common ground
The four runners featured in the film; (below) Basav Biradar.

City run

Basav Biradar's latest film, *One Foot In Front Of The Other*, chronicles the journey of four runners who decide to run from Bengaluru to Chennai

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Basav Biradar says his new film, *One Foot In Front Of The Other*, which chronicles the journey of four runners who decide to run from Bengaluru to Chennai along the highway, is a political act. "There is a lot of individuality when people speak of ultra-running, including the loneliness of the long-distance runner and other clichés." And yet, what struck him about the people featured in the film, Chandra Gopalan, Manikandan Seran, Krishan Dhall and Santhosh Padmanabhan, was that "they see it as a community activity". Unlike traditional marathoners, who train with particular races and outcomes in mind, these four runners, Basav says, did not have any such goals. "In the hypercapitalist world we live in, I found it interesting," says the Bengaluru-based writer, filmmaker and researcher. "They are not overselling individual achievements or looking at material gain, but as a lifestyle that brings people together." The four runners, all of whom are part of

Runner's High, a running community in Bengaluru, are also not ideologically restricted. "These people with different backgrounds find a common ground, not just in the sense of sport but life," says Basav, who believes that this community spirit is vital today, at a time when so much alienation exists. "It gives you hope."

The film opens with a shot of the runners traversing down the dark streets of Bengaluru at dawn, the city calm and silent, save for the occasional call of the koel and the soft, rhythmic thudding of



shoes against asphalt. From there, it moves to a scene depicting the planning behind the Bengaluru-Chennai run, "the first time they did it (a city-to-city run), but after that, they ran many more times like this," says Basav. The narrative then segues into the backstories of each runner via interviews, interspersed with footage of the actual run. Not only do the interviews explore the runners' motivation, but they also offer insights into who they are, including their vulnerabilities, struggles, and moral frameworks through which they view the world. "I didn't want the film to look like a sporty, running film, but bring back the idea of regular people doing this sort of thing." Besides the backstories, the film also highlights the relationship between the four runners. In one part of the film, for instance, we see Krishan struggling on the third day with blisters and pain, leading Basav to expect him to give up. "It looked untenable at that point: he was struggling," Krishan, however, did not, choosing instead to stay there and let the day pass. Basav says it taught him a great lesson on how to keep at it. "That specific incident offered an understanding of the kind of love they have for each other."

One Foot In Front Of The Other, which is self-funded, will have a preview screening on July 20 in Bengaluru. Basav, who has also sent the film for a couple of festivals, says he will make the film accessible post the festival circuit. "I am trying to find the best model for this film, and deciding where it can go."

