

metro PLUS

THE HINDU

Tips and tricks on how to kickstart your fitness journey by veteran runners **P3**

HARRIS JAYARAJ'S SON, SAMUEL, HITS THE RIGHT NOTES **P4**

Animal prints are back

There is no escaping them this year. Leopard, tiger, cheetah, zebra, Dalmatian... these busy prints are turning wardrobes into a menagerie. From skirts, coats, and dresses in suede, velvet, silk to jeans with loud animal prints, it's louder than ever.



Multi-verses

The universe-building of the last few years is primed to explode in 2025. The YRF spy verse will get its first female-led entry in *Alpha*, while Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR will face off — and, in all likelihood, dance off — in *War 2*. Meanwhile, the horror universe of Maddock Films (*Street 2, Bhediya*) is inching towards its endgame. There are also a dozen sequels in the works in Telugu and Tamil, as filmmakers explore new worlds. Are you ready?

Girl Math

This playful, yet controversial topic in personal finance took social media by storm this year. While it gave rise to a lot of debate about the logic of justifying big spends, experts believed that it is still important because it got people talking about their spending habits. It could translate into a healthier conversation about investments and savings.

The superhero rises

After arguably the worst year in cinematic history for comic book cinema, 2025 is do or die for superhero movies. Major Marvel and DC titles like *Thunderbolts*, *Fantastic Four*, *Superman*, *Captain America: Brave New World* and more are looking to break through the rug.

Travel for love

Yes, that's a thing now. And it's not just the Gen Z or millennials who are taking the plunge. Dating apps and matrimonial sites are passe. People now want to make connections in real life. They want their meet-cute while on vacation.

As 2025 rolls in, let's say goodbye to avocado toast, loud luxury and Brat summers. What is in store? Team MetroPlus lists 25 things that we think will trend this year. How many will you tick off?

The quarter century mark

ILLUSTRATIONS: SOUMYADIP SINHA
DESIGN: XJG SATHEESH

Biophilic art

In increasingly urbanised spaces, people will seek out bits of Nature, attempting to make sanctuaries out of their homes. Nature-inspired art, with earthy tones and botanical themes, will be preferred over dark themes. Think Claude Monet's Waterlilies. A soft, natural colour palette with mineral honey and light peach that evokes springtime and sunsets or a fun, energetic palette with versatile shades of blue are likely to rule the year.



The translated word

With South Korean author Han Kang winning the Nobel Prize in Literature and the cascading interest that the Hallyu or the Korean pop and culture wave has had on literature from the country, translations are in the spotlight. Japanese and Korean healing fiction set in bookstores, laundromats, and even department stores will also amass more fans.

Creative gigs

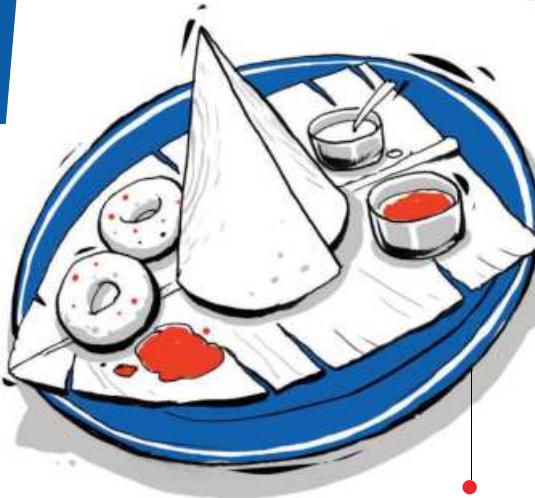
Raw, unfiltered lyrics and a high-energy club aesthetic will take over pop music in 2025. Gen Z listeners value unconventional gig experiences, and so, concepts like the Kitchen Rave in Mumbai — where the lines between a DJ booth and a chef's station are blurred — are surely the way forward.

Micro restaurants

Look forward to intimate dining as chefs and restauranteurs set up smaller spaces which allow them to specialise, experiment and cater to niche audiences. We will also see the rise of cosy supper clubs, as smaller groups gather for thematically planned dinners. Look forward to making connections over candlelight.

Bitcoin bubble

It sounds crazy, but bitcoins are likely to hit \$200,000 given that US President-elect Donald Trump plans to adopt crypto currency as part of the US strategic reserves. The price of the cryptocurrency has gained 44% since Trump won the US presidential election. Institutional investors like Bernstein Private Wealth Management also predict the price of Bitcoin will double by the end of 2025.



South Indian food goes global

Dosas are already a hit, and Alappuzha's red fish curry is next in line, alongside Madurai's mutton chukka. From New York to London, expect to see more restaurants, food festivals and pop-ups celebrating authentic regional recipes for a growing, and increasingly appreciative, Western audience.



Reset retreats

After yoga vacations and spa holidays, these retreats promise to not just recharge travellers, but to increase resilience, purpose and longevity, and reset our biological rhythms. Travel is set to be all about disconnecting from the everyday humdrum and retreating into a cocoon with likeminded individuals and reworking the way you eat, sleep, and exercise.

Smarter phones?

By the end of 2024, only select iPhone models and some flagship Android devices were shipped with generative AI features. This could change in 2025 as several smartphone makers will launch mid-range handsets infused with AI features coupled with upgrades to camera, battery and processor.

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 SCAN FOR RECIPES



Video game tourism

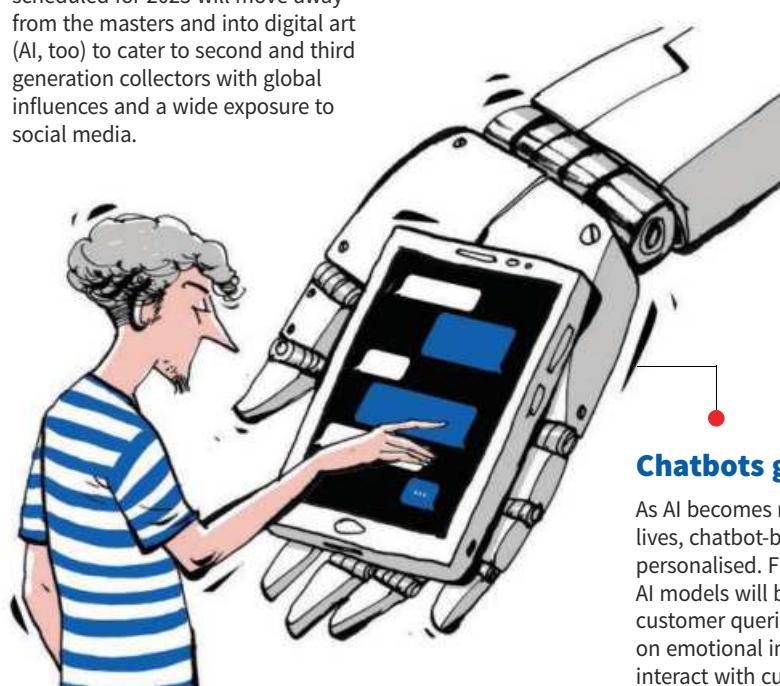
After film tourism, this is the new trend. Gamers are now flocking to locations where their favourite games are set. For example, fans of *Assassin's Creed* are travelling to destinations like the Colosseum in Rome, and Notre Dame.

**A tequila sunrise**

While the sober-curious continue to experiment with zero spirits, the International Wine and Spirits Research (IWSR) says that tequila continues to snag markets world over. The calorie-conscious particularly prefer this form of alcohol as it acclimates well in a cocktail glass. A picante was surely cheered on New Year's.

The new Indian art fair

It is the year of the Indian art fair. Fairs scheduled for 2025 will move away from the masters and into digital art (AI, too) to cater to second and third generation collectors with global influences and a wide exposure to social media.

**Matching steps**

Running clubs across the country are becoming hotbeds for dating. In 2024, Puma and Bumble got together to host a singles-only running event. According to Bumble's recent survey, nearly three in four Indians (72%) would be open to go on a sports-themed first date and as many as 44% consider lack of interest in sport, a deal breaker.

The quarter century mark

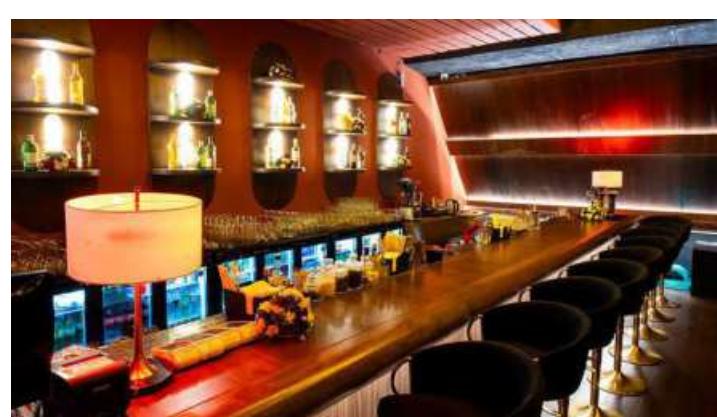
CONTINUED FROM
» PAGE 1

Consider me, influenced

Social media personalities and stand up comedians will continue to snag book deals as publishers will attempt to cash in on the influencers' followers count.

Chatbots get personal

As AI becomes more entrenched in our daily digital lives, chatbot-based services will become more personalised. Fine-tuned natural language processing AI models will be better equipped to handle complex customer queries. These chatbots will also be trained on emotional intelligence parameters so they can interact with customers in a more mature way.



Priyadarshini Paitandy

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The pastel pink soup in front of me looks like it is dressed for the Met Gala. It even has a pleated white tutu-esque skirt. Except that is not a tutu but a hot pot made of paper. Interestingly, the soup is served on it. Called kami-nabe pot, it is made of washi, a traditional Japanese paper. Though this hearty soup, brimming with tofu, chicken, and broccoli, feels great on this rainy day – a word of caution – if you don't like the taste of fermented miso or seaweed, this may not suit your palate.

At Origami, a new Pan Asian resto bar in Palavakkam, influences are drawn from Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam. The menu is consciously devoid of the usual suspects like chilli chicken and Phuket fish. Instead you find yaki buta skewers, Thai prawn crackers and yang nyem tong dak among others. "The idea is to bring in an Asian experience and not focus on what is already being served in most places," says Arasu Dennis, consultant.

Located in Green Meadows resort, Origami is housed inside an orange A-frame building with a terracotta tiled roof. An alley leads me to the door, opening up to a space with large origami birds – which are actually lights – hanging from the high glass-panelled ceiling. Today, the DJ's beats are interspersed with the steady pitter patter of the rain.

On the far end is the elevated bar, where the mixologist is

From gochujang in whisky to shiso leaves in cocktails, Origami draws influences from Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam

Yakitori meets gunfire



rhythmically shaking up a cocktail. Our first drink feels like a treasure hunt. It is called Gunfire and conceals a combination of flavours. The drink is sweet with an underlying taste of milk. It also has light rum, red wine, spices, orange juice, dried pomegranate tea, and milk.

"While creating the cocktails we decided to stick to the core of the concept which is Pan Asian, and give importance to the ingredients," says Harinath, director of The Masons (a bar school and consulting company), who conceptualised the cocktail menu at Origami. Which explains why you might find gochujang in your whisky, and ingredients like umeshu

Bursting with flavours This new resto bar serves soup on paper and engages the palate with innovative combinations. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

plum, yuzu, matcha, shiso leaves, truffle oil, soy sauce, and shiitake mushroom in your drinks. Starting this weekend, there will be small martini trolleys making their way to each table where the bartender will create a cocktail for the guests. Our guests can see techniques like throwing, where the martini is aerated, it's almost similar to the filter coffee making process," says Harinath.

The starters arrive at a quick pace. The chicken yakitori,

served on a grill, has a rich, smoky flavour, and is tender. What follows is crispy shiitake mushroom, drizzled with black and white sesame seeds. It is average at best, with a goopy sweet coating. The spicy chicken Shanghai potstickers are so smooth they almost slither off the chopsticks. But so good, we polish off the entire portion. The savoury meat filling with hints of Sichuan pepper is fiery, and pairs well with our next drink that tastes of peanut butter and is rightfully named Nutty.

Next, we ditch our cutlery to make a happy mess with the mushroom bao that has lettuce flowing out. The bao is soft and the first mouthful reveals a crunchy mushroom patty with cheesy insides. As Joey Tribbiani says, "What's not to like?"

We end the meal with sticky rice and glossy chicken teriyaki and yet another cocktail, Kaboom. With gin, apricot, honey syrup, and agave nectar, this smells like a freshly mowed lawn. Refreshing!

Time for desserts. First, a Japanese cotton cheese cake that melts in the mouth. The matcha ice cream, though beautiful green in colour, has an overpowering matcha flavour – slightly bitter, and vegetal, with a dash of sweetness.

And now we are finally done. But the rain insists we stay and enjoy another drink, explore unusual combinations, while letting the music transport us back to the last decade.

A meal for two costs ₹2,000 plus taxes. Origami is located at Green Meadows Resort, 4, 364 A, Anna Salai, Palavakkam.

**Wellness at the core**

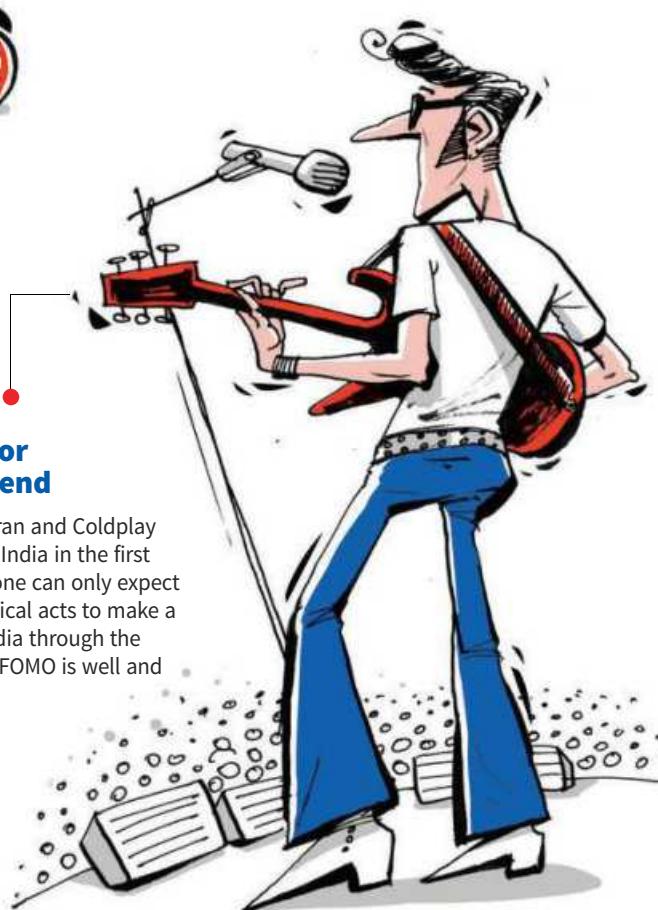
The emphasis on personal health and well-being is only going to peak this year and home designs will see dedicated wellness spaces taking centrestage. From home gyms and yoga studios to meditation rooms and spas, these spaces will focus on bringing calm to everyday life.

Bubble skirts

Bubble skirts and bubble-hem dresses will have a moment. This trend that made its debut in the 1950s has made repeated comebacks over the last few decades. You saw elegant Princess Diana wearing one at the Cannes Festival in 1987. Now recently Zendaya, Kylie Jenner, and Blackpink's Rosé have joined in.

Primary play

This year, we ditch the basics and revive the whimsy of childhood creativity in home design. We will see the embracing of bold, vibrant colours like red, yellow, and blue, alongside playful patterns. Think hand-painted furniture, funky murals, curved furniture, asymmetrical decor, and whimsical patterns that will create spaces reminiscent of childhood art projects.

**Concert for the weekend**

With Ed Sheeran and Coldplay all set to tour India in the first half of 2025, one can only expect more big musical acts to make a beeline for India through the year. Concert FOMO is well and truly a thing!

Baked and loaded

The Madras Bake Sale returns with 25 home bakers, trending desserts, live music, and puppies

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One of the most popular genres of content on social media will invariably be food, more specifically desserts. Videos of batter being mixed, melting chocolate, rising puff pastries, icing being piped on perfectly baked pastries will always take the cake. There is something new trending every week that everyone wants to get their hands on. Born from this desire was the idea to host a bake sale for the women home bakers to give the city a taste of the internet.

The Madras Bake sale, hosted by entrepreneurs Maaria Tanveer, Cindana Manickavel and Priya Anup, coming up with the third edition, is a platform that elevates promising home bakers. "We're doing this because these home bakers don't have big budgets for advertising and social media. They also might not have knowledge of taking high quality photos and videos," says Maaria, who is a home baker herself. "This event will take the customers to the source."

After two successful editions of the bake sale, this year's event will feature 25 home bakers like Cranked Palette, Hew and Frost, Amtams and more. "We curate the sale in such a way that no two bakers are selling the same goodies," she says, adding that some bakers will also be selling pet-friendly baked goods as the event is open to pets.

The sale will also play host to a pet adoption drive by iadopt.in, a Chennai-based pet adoption organisation.

There will also be stalls set up by Magic Colours and Sugar Shine India, manufacturers of baking accessories and decorations.

The event will be elevated with live music by three artistes – Band Souled Out, and solo artistes Anjali Manoharan and



Sweet treats (Above) Baked goods from the Madras Bake Sale 2024; (Below) Live musical performances. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Aanchal Bordoloi. Since the goods get sold out quickly, the event will also have stalls by commercial outlets like Mexe, Boba Baba and more.

When asked what to look out for at the bake sale, Maaria says, "Ironically, at bake sales, savoury items do very well because those are few among the many desserts. But this year, the pistachio kunafa chocolate is trending." In 2024, this dessert took the Internet by storm. It did not take much time for bakers in the city to jump on the trend and create their own iterations with this combination of salty, nutty and sweet tastes.

"This is going to be big this time. I have seen bakers make chocolates, brownies, and even dream cakes with this kunafa pistachio."

At Chettinad Sath Sadhana School, Adyar on January 5 from 11am to 6pm.



Chef-tested weddings

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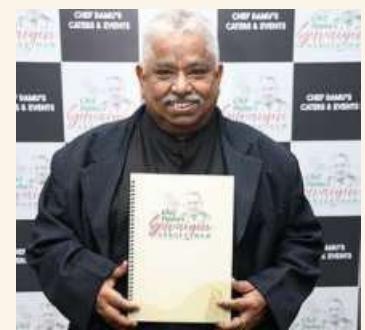
K Damodharan, popularly known as Chef Damu, is a television personality, teacher, author, and holder of three world records. As of December 30, he adds another feather to his cap as a wedding planner. Through Chef Damu's Suvaiyin Sangeetham - Caters and Events, he aims to not only cater weddings but also plan them.

"I have been cooking for 35 years now, and during that time, I've catered about 10 weddings. When organising my daughter's wedding, we saw the potential and challenges of wedding planning," shares chef Damu.

The menu features event staples as well as many of chef Damu's signature recipes like vegetarian mutton biryani, vahakai vanjaram fry and more. Chef Damu's services extend beyond food. From décor and finding a priest to organising musicians and even planning the couple's honeymoon, his team handles multiple aspects.

The packages - Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum - include dishes from various parts of India, along with Pan Asian and Continental options. "We have expert cooks from across the country. For sweets, we have mithaiwalas from Kolkata to prepare authentic Bengali desserts," he says. "In addition to meals, we'll also provide *seer batchanam* (sweets and savouries exchanged by the bride's and groom's families), and *kattu saadham* (mixed rice) packages."

To book Chef Damu's Suvaiyin Sangeetham - Caters and Events, contact 9840083111 or visit chefdamu.com.



New beginnings Chef Damu at the launch . SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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At 66 years, K Selvanayagam is of the firm belief that running is in everyone's blood. "If you decide to run and have the resolve to see this through, the rest of your life - your schedule will automatically fall into place," he says. This is definitely the case for the Chennai resident, whose day usually begins at 4 am, with a 90-minute run on one of the city's many flyovers.

Selvanayagam is among the city's hordes of runners, and at 60, has seen the evolution of running in the city - right from the formation of the city's first running groups. "Long ago, only a few of us used to run here and with no social media to bring us together, we would place a small signboard near a tea shop at the beach asking people who regularly walked there to join us if they were interested," he recalls. Times have now changed, with several neighbourhood communities having walking and running groups, senior citizens banding together to go on walks and runs, and Chennai Runners, the city's largest running community expanding to sixteen chapters to cover the city.

Having participated in marathons for years, Selvanayagam's heart now lies with Nature and temples. "For eight years now, around 15 of us have been participating in the Sivalaya Ottam, where we visit around 11 temples by covering 95 kms on Sivarathri day. This is one of the finest examples of an unorganised run of sorts happening for years, and the distance is a true test of your mental determination," he says.

Long strides
The reasons for senior citizens taking to running are varied. For Capt Dr K Narasimha and Malthy Simha, it was a combination of wanting to prioritise their health, take up an activity together, beat the empty nest syndrome once their children moved abroad.

"When we started running with Chennai Runners in 2013, I remember us being



A pacy start

Do fitness resolutions that involve running feature high up on your 2025 list? Let these Chennai runners above the age of 60 inspire you

among the first couples to run together," Malthy laughs, recalling their beginnings. They have participated in over 23 half marathons, and most recently, ran at the 50th year of the Berlin Marathon in September 2024. An active part of the Bessie Flyers chapter of Chennai Runners, Capt Dr Narasimha makes a strong case for people looking to start running to join a group. "You will not be conscious of your pace or your tiredness - the pitter patter of feet running all around you will get you into

the groove. Couples who can, especially, should run together. It is a great bonding activity," he says.

Malthy, a clinical psychologist adds that running as a part of a group has taught them patience, concentration, discipline, better decision making, and most importantly social skills.

"Except for stray dogs in a few areas, Chennai has been especially safe for women to run, in my experience. When I used to train for full marathons in peak summer, I used to start running by

myself from as early as 3am, and I have never faced any issues," she says.

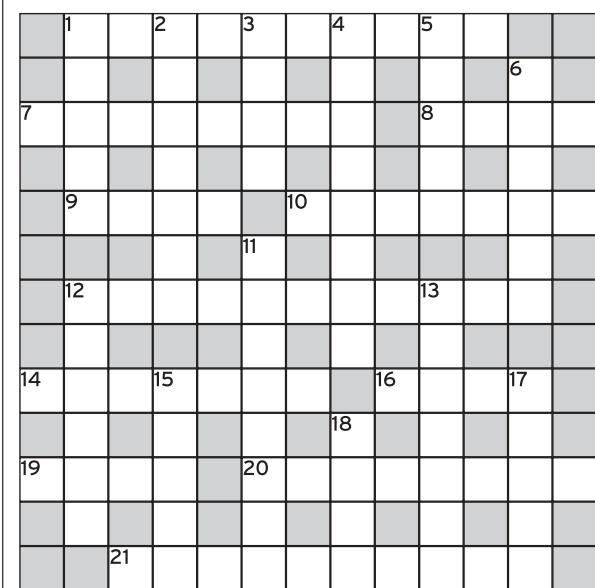
The first few months of the year already seem packed with marathons for runners like Baba Arasan, a retired Forest Department official. On Friday, the long distance runner will head out of the city for the Hyderabad airport run. "I have participated in over 300 marathons so far and half marathons are my favourite," he says, having been running for over fifty years now. From the Vasai Virar marathon in Maharashtra to the Tata Steel marathon in Kolkata, Baba has been travelling to run quite a bit, and rattles off a list of his best timings and finishes. "In the 2019 Chennai Marathon, I finished the half marathon in 1 hour, 25 minutes and 26 seconds," he says.

For people across ages who want to get started on their running journey, Yasir Sultan, president, Chennai Runners says they have a yearly couch-to-5k program which is free of cost. This, he says, has been extremely useful for senior citizens and the Chennai Runners has seen an uptick in people above the age of sixty sign up. "Instead of them randomly trying to run, we guide them on what to do and have mentors and coaches on board. Once their training is done, they are absorbed into one of the sixteen chapters we have, and they can run all-year-long," Yasir explains.

For people looking to be bitten by the running bug this year, we ask these veteran runners for tips and tricks.

Selvanayagam, Narasimha, and Malthy, all unanimously preach waking up early, given how Chennai's hot climate makes it impossible to go out for a run in the late morning or afternoon. "I also advocate for everyone getting a medical check up done before they start, and with running, I believe that a proper method should be followed. Start with simple mobility and stretching, then walk and jog and slowly pick up from there," Malthy says, adding "Most importantly, running teaches you how to listen to your body."

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13623



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Across

1 Complete (10)

7 Uninterrupted (8)

8 Wonky (4)

9 Promote (4)

10 Introduction (7)

12 Wrongly interpret - I censor smut (anag) (11)

14 Give evidence (7)

16 Increases (4)

19 Let the cat out of the bag (4)

20 Hypocritical (3-5)

21 Parallel to the ground (10)

Down

1 Toady (5)

2 Greek goddess of divine vengeance (7)

3 Addict (4)

4 Woman teacher (8)

5 Lag (5)

6 Active grievance (6)

11 It's thrown at newly-weds (8)

12 Breakfast dish (6)

13 Aglow (7)

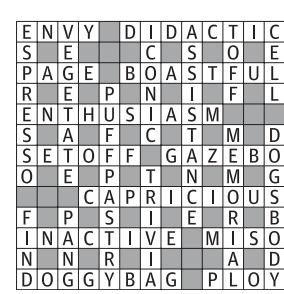


To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

15 Verboten (5)
17 Words used in a magical incantation (5)
18 Non-starter (2-2)

Solution will appear in MetroPlus dated January 9, 2025.

Solution No. 13622



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VENUE IN CHENNAI

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Cathedral Road: Dass Community Hall, No.55, Opp. Maris Hotel - 600086

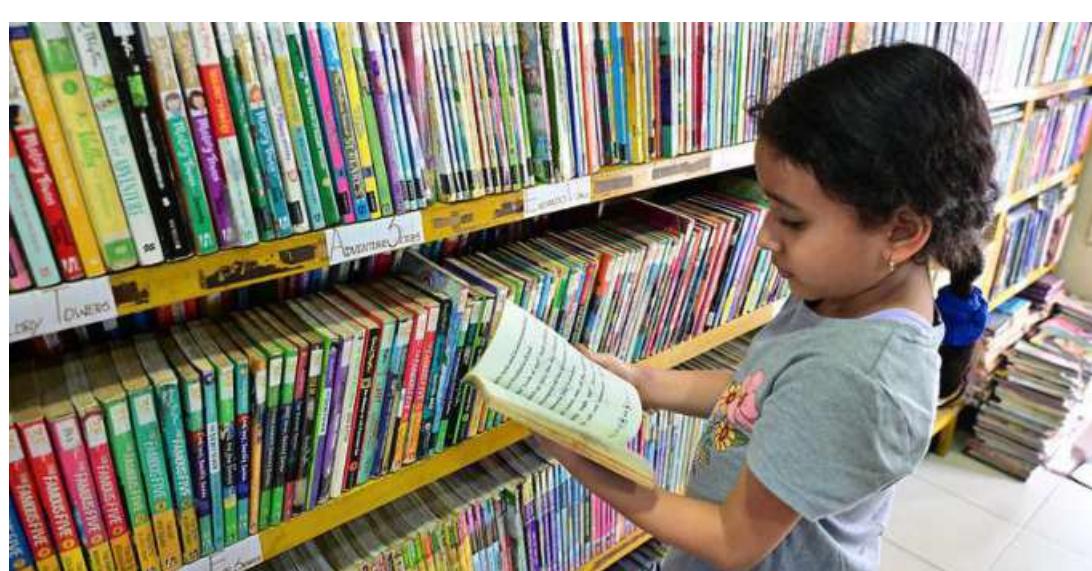
Egmore: Guild Of Service, 18, Casa Major Road - 600008

Anna Nagar: D. K. Kalyana Mandapam, W-114, 3rd Avenue, Near Round Thana - 600040

Ambattur: Arul Jothi Kalyana Mandapam, 162 A, Redhills High Road - 600053

OMR Sholinganallur: K.V.L Kalyana Mahal, 161, Opp. Accenture, Opp. Bharat Petroleum - 600019

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The festival to-go bag

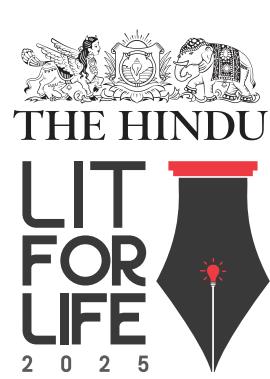
The Hindu Lit for Life is on January 18 and 19 but the excitement is not relegated to the weekend. Here is everything you can do in the run up to the event

Sanjana Ganesh
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Booking a ride

Mobile libraries tend to elicit attention in neighbourhoods as they transform public streets into reading hotspots. The Hindu's mobile library on wheels will be cruising past areas in the city and halting at spots like Anna University, Anna Nagar Metro, VR Mall, Thiru. Vi. Ka Park, Alsa Mall and Arumbakkam metro until January 19. Public can hop on and off, take a look at the collection in the library and donate books.

Learning Muthiah's Madras
Historian S Muthiah's writings brought the Madras of yore to life. Through him, we learnt about why British administrator Sir Thomas



THE SHARPEST LITERATURE FESTIVAL IN INDIA
In association with



Munro's statue occupies the prime spot on the arterial Anna Salai. We also know of the sweet treats and imported goods available at Spencer's Mall because of his writings in The Hindu's Madras Miscellany column. Historian V Sriram brings the writings of the famous chronicler of Madras through a heritage walk on will begin from Gymkhana Club gate and will conclude at Spencer Plaza on January 4.

Magic under the moonlight
Watch films that educate and delight in equal measure on a screen whose backdrop is Chennai's vast, endless sea. Previous editions of this event have elicited enthusiastic responses with children and adults alike, lounging by the sand and casually enjoying classic Tamil hits. This

edition on January 11 at Marina beach promises the same.

Getting schooled

When stories gain voices, small worlds that are tucked in one's imagination end up coming alive. The Hindu aims to do the same. Storytelling workshops across city schools will be held between January 6 and 8.

A room full of stories

Children's literature in India is currently experiencing a boom. A panel discussion on the topic The World of Indian Children's Books/Pictures and Words: The Story of Children's Books in India will be held on January 5 with moderators Amrita Patwardhan, and writers Sandhya Rao, Radhika Menon and Shailaja Menon. Titled Tales and Talks, this event will take place at the British Council at 5pm.

Get quizzical

This new year, get ready with sharpened pencils and a sharper mind. If you have encountered information about the authors who have been part of the previous editions of The Hindu's Lit for Life and their works, here is your chance to win prizes. The quiz will feature on The Hindu's website and print editions. Keep a look out.

Sign up for the events at @hindulitforlife on Instagram.
The Hindu Lit For Life is in association with Christ University. Associate partners: RR Donnelley, Blue Star, NITTE, Uttarakhand Tourism. Bookstore partner: Crossword. Water partner: Repute



To register for the event, visit <https://newsth.live/LFL2025ED> or scan the QR code.

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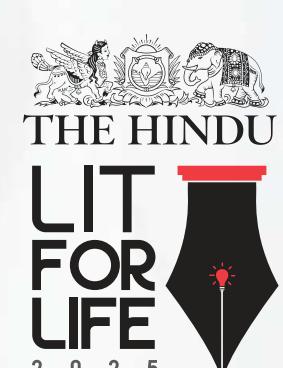
TALES AND TALKS

Join us for an insightful panel discussion on the evolution of children's literature in India, where words and illustrations create impactful stories for young readers. Moderated by Amrita Patwardhan, with panellists Sandhya Rao, Radhika Menon, and Shailaja Menon.

On January 5, 2025
From 5 pm to 6 pm
at British Council, Chennai



Scan the QR code to register



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