



# metroPLUS

THE HINDU

Get your fix of puliserry and paalada payasam at these Onam sadya lunches **P2**

HIPHOP TAMIZHA ADHI SET TO ROCK CHENNAI **P4**



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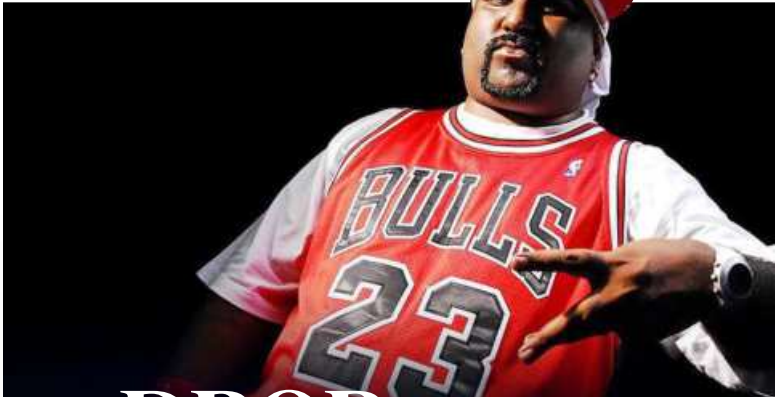
Twenty years ago, Yogi B, a young Malaysian Tamil television executive, arrived in Chennai for the first time. The sights and sounds of autos, tea shops and the city's people are still fresh in his mind. To say that he was in awe, is putting it mildly. "People don't understand but as a child of the diaspora that read the *Thevaram*, watched Tamil films and heard songs from here, it felt I was finally touching the soil of my origin. Everything felt like an absolute culture shock. Neurons burst. I could not close my mouth. I saw Tamil Nadu in all its glory and variety. It was a magical, sensory overload," he says.

Over the years, this rapper and music producer behind blockbuster hits like 'Madai Thirandu' and 'Engayum Eppothum', says that his relationship with the city has transformed with years of flying in and out for performances and recordings. The romance however, is unshaken. "Makkal Inga thangamanavangam (People have heart of gold)," he says.

It is this romance and years of cross-cultural exchange between the Tamil diasporic community across the world, that the headliner and his long-time collaborator Emcee Jesz will bring on stage at the second edition of *The Hindu* Made of Chennai Food and Music Festival 2024.

The two-day event marks the end of *The Hindu's* 40-day Made of Chennai celebration that put the city's numerous facets under the spotlight in a set of events that showcased pageantry including cinema by the beach and an archival photo exhibit at the newspaper's head office on Anna Salai. At this festival featuring 10 acts and 40 food stalls, on September 14 and 15 at Island Grounds, watch performers like Arivu and The Ambassa Band; Haricharan and the Drums Kumaran Collective featuring Sireesha Bhagavatula; Maalavika Sundar; Motta Maadi Music; Paul Jacob's Folk Agenda and Gowwli, the band.

High Octane Industrial Rock featuring JHANU, promises raw energy and explosive music, says Harkirat Singh Sangha (Harry), the



## DROP OF THE beat

Chennai's sounds and flavours come together at *The Hindu's* Made of Chennai Food and Music Festival



bassist of the band. Although popular bands like Justice and Rammstein have been their inspiration, Harry says that Ilaiyaraaja finds his way into their minds while creating music. "Our vision is to see crowds till the horizon when we perform," he says. Office Gaana from On the Streets of Chennai on the other hand, will blend storytelling, office drama and reliability in a peppy, gaana-style format, says Keerthivasan Raghuram (Monk). Expect covers of popular Tamil songs and originals from this band that came together because someone in their office decided to play a forgotten dholak. "We are 200% excited,"



Bits of Madras (Clockwise from top left) Yogi B, kutti samosas, bun butter jam, members of JHANU and the mango milk. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"People might want to try the early morning biryanis of Pulianthope or the grape juice at Kunhiraman but may not be able to travel the distance for it. The food festival provides all these Chennai delicacies in a single place. That is perhaps its greatest USP," she says.

Akilesh Baskaran, behind the 99-year-old Kunhiraman General Stores, says that they were sold out in two hours last year. This year, the cold, tart yet sweet, and delightfully purple grape juice, will be made in excess to cater to the demands of the festival. He is prepared and will be introducing new flavours like black currant to the mix.

Shabnam says that no two biryanis, grills, dosas or butter buns will be like any other at the festival. She has been careful about avoiding repeats, she says.

"This is where our paya biryani, made with tender, succulent meat comes in. We serve it with a pudina chutney and have been able to hold a steady crowd for three generations now. It is different from the other biryanis in the city. Honestly, we did not expect to sell out last year. This year, the production has been amped up," says Syed Moinudeen S of KGN Arifa, who assists his father in the business.

The festival will also have stalls serving Mexican tostadas, iced coffee, halwa, sandwiches and ice creams, besides the staple South Indian fare at the event. Like Yogi B, prepare to be in awe and fall in love with Chennai once again.

*The Hindu Made of Chennai Food and Music Festival is on September 14 and 15 at Island Grounds 5pm onwards. Entry is free but participants must register at [madeofchennai.thehindu.com](http://madeofchennai.thehindu.com).*

*The Hindu Made of Chennai Food and Music Festival is held in association with ACKO, BeepKart. In partnership with: GCC, GCTP, TTDC and Namma Marina. Associate Partner: Ather, Akshayakalpa. Expert Partner: Social Bee. Artist Partner: ACTC. Radio Partner: BIG FM. Happiness partner: On the streets of Chennai. Event partner: Torque*



Scan the QR code to register for the food and music festival.



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When she was given a DSLR camera, Nagapattinam-based A Mahalakshmi automatically trained her lens on her fellow fisherwomen. She documented the lives of young widows from the fishing community, who struggled to fend for their families with the little they made selling fish. "I shot a lot of photos," recalls the 34-year-old mother of two, speaking about the three-month workshop by

## Women behind the camera

Fisherwomen-turned-photographers from Tamil Nadu and Odisha are all set to display their work at an exhibition in the city

independent photographer M Palanikumar, organised by the NGO Dakshin Foundation in 2023. "I wondered what we would do with all of it," she says.

**Snapshots of the sea**  
Photographs tracking the lives of fisherwomen on display at the exhibit. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



hear our stories," she says. Palanikumar says that the women – eight each from Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and Ganjam from Odisha – shot over 25,000 photos over the three months. "We will be displaying around 350 of them at the exhibition. We hope the show opens up new opportunities for the women," he says, adding that a handful of them are now keen on taking up photography as a career.

This is the first time fisherwomen from the two states are participating in an exhibition of such scale. "Most of them picked subjects to their liking, following them for several days," Palanikumar points out.

There are stories on coastal erosion – Pratima from Odisha has documented how her village was gradually eroded over a three-month span; on the nuts and bolts of



fishing, right from how fish is caught to how it is sold; how dried fish is made; on how women from the community play a key role in driving its economy. "There are plenty of landscape shots and colour; we can see how different the colour of the sea is in Odisha and Tamil Nadu," explains Palanikumar.

By documenting their lives, the women captured rare snippets that might be completely new to outsiders. "We get to experience their world through their eyes," says Palanikumar. "This results in something magical."

Palanikumar recalls the then Nagapattinam District Collector Johny Tom Varghese enquiring if the women can help document the various aspects of the city; some of them also contribute to a local NGO called Sneha. Palanikumar says: "The exhibition is a starting point; one that will show their work to the outside world."

**Chronicles Of The Tides: Migration, Conflict, and Climate** is on from September 23 to 29, 10am to 8pm, at Lalit Kala Akademi, Grems Road. Photographs on display are for sale.



### The sound of music

The Madras Guild of Performing Arts (MGPA) junior ensemble, fondly called the #Shortz, is all set to present its first concert. Children between six and 13 will be performing songs across genres and styles including folk, pop and contemporary pieces. Atul Isaac, director of music, MGPA will be conducting the show. @The Music Academy, Mini Hall, September 14, 7pm. Tickets at [www.mdnd.com](http://www.mdnd.com). For details, call 9677046793.



### The military quiz

Colours of Glory Foundation, Chennai, invites university students to participate in its annual Online Military History and Awareness Quiz 2024. A team of two members from the same institution can register by sending a text message to 944464385. Six top scoring teams will be part of the finals. The last date to register is September 27 by noon. Entry is free. The online quiz will be held on September 28 (3pm to 3.15pm) and September 29 (11am to 1pm). For details, mail [info@coloursofglory.org](mailto:info@coloursofglory.org).









**A scoop of Italy**  
(Clockwise from far left)  
French toast; gelatos; an  
inside view of the cafe  
and double cheese  
omelette. JOHAN  
SATHYADAS



# frozen mousse moment

**Stellar Gelato & Cafe** is ECR's answer to Italian frozen desserts like a good gelato or a silky semifreddo

**N**umb lips are perhaps an indicator of a good gelato experience. This means that multiple greedy spoonfuls have been consumed, albeit too quickly with great disregard for an imminent brain freeze. Who can be patient with a gelato? As per science, one should not. After all, it melts faster than the ice cream.

While on a quick drive chasing the coast, it is hard to miss the colourful stained glass facade of ECR's new Stellar Gelato & Cafe.

The route frequented by weekend holidaymakers has had no dearth of ice cream spots, but a good gelato is hard to come by. Which is precisely why Chef Chindi Varadarajulu of city-favourite Pumpkin Tales and restaurateur Arjun Sethuraman decided to partner with Italian Chef Mirko Tognetti to introduce ECR to a range of Italian frozen desserts, including the semifreddo: “Not an ice-cream cake, but a small sponge with meringue and mousse that is frozen, with a little bit of gelato,” explains Chindi. This collaboration led Chindi and Arjun to Italy where they learned to make gelatos from scratch from Tognetti.

The menu boasts of some good old favorites from Pumpkin Tales, which is precisely where we start.

The pistachio gelato has a balanced creamy texture, and just the right flavour of pistachio, mildly sweet and combined with tiny chunks for the bite.

The strawberry sorbet makes a dramatic entry with its tart sweetness — not one bit overpowering, but every bit refreshing. If you are feeling experimental, stack it up with a scoop of the mango sorbet made from blast-frozen Banganapalli, and dig deep into a towering cone. The gelatos come in three sizes ranging from a single scoop to a three-scoop combination and even sundaes.

While Stellar hopes to make its range of gelatos their identity, the limited brunch menu served till 3pm, offers a great morning fix for long drives. The breakfast burger for

instance is impeccably balanced, with a fried egg inside paired with Provolone cheese, lettuce, tomato, and potato wedges. The rainbow toast is a clear winner: fresh cucumber, cherry tomatoes, red pepper and mushrooms are served on sourdough toast with a



*Stellar Gelato & Cafe is at 110, East Coast Road, Injambakkam. Cost for two (for gelatos) is ₹500 to ₹600, and (for breakfast) is ₹1,000 to ₹1,200.*

wrote almost 800 short stories in Tamil.

Ramakrishna says that a majority of their audience has read Chudamani, and the interest is already palpable. “Most of these stories were written by her between 1960 and 1980, in fact, she made such bold statements that you can’t imagine being made today. Chudamani’s women are very strong, in a quiet way.”

Chudamani 2 will be staged on September 14 at 6.30pm at Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai. Donor passes from ₹600, ₹360, ₹240 and ₹120 can be purchased from [mdnd.in](http://mdnd.in).

**Shades of grey** A still from the rehearsals. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The stories touch upon the many facets of the human mind, through a gendered lens.

“These are all small vignettes of life, each about 18 to 19 minutes-long which have been strung together seamlessly,” says Ramakrishna. “The wonderful thing about Chudamani is that in none of her stories is she ever judgemental. She tells her readers, this is what happened, take it and do what you like with it” he adds, of the writer, who

# The world of Chudamani

## Tamil writer R Chudamani's stories are being brought alive on-stage by The Madras Players

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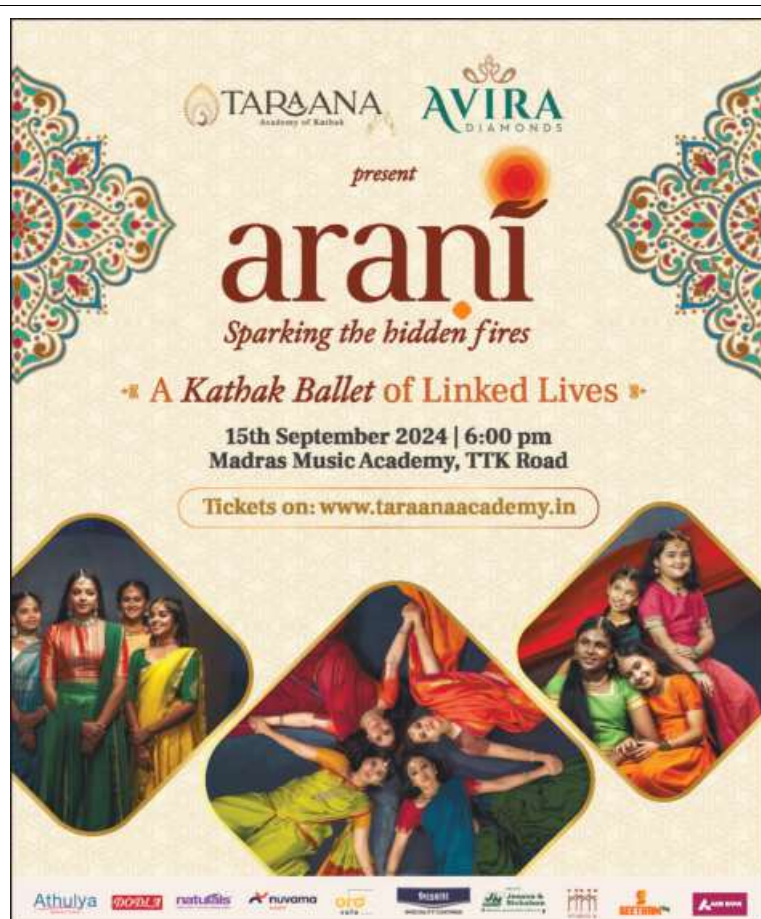
**I**n the 1960s, Tamil writer R Chudamani captured the many shades of a woman's lived experiences like no other. Each short story or novel was a testament to an unabashed boldness captured beautifully through her probing prose, that has for long been adapted in many forms. Her first story, *Kaveri*, was written in 1957 while her first novel, *Manathukku Iniyaval* (Beloved Woman) was published in 1960. One such adaptation was in 2016 in Chennai, in the form of an anthology of plays by The Madras Players that ran to a full house.

Now, eight years later, a sequel to that anthology takes the stage

this weekend in the city. This time, a request from R Chudamani Memorial Trust, kick-started the project under PC Ramakrishna's directorial.

"Over the last year, I have been looking, reading and picking out stories. I picked seven stories this time that had a 'Chudamani' feel about it – by that I mean, they are stories of women who made a statement," says Ramakrishna.

Each of the seven stories, translated by CT Indra, Prabha Sridevan, PC Ramakrishna, the late KS Subramaniam and others, showcase the everyday woman and her conundrums: from an unmarried woman in her late 30s, a young girl who struggles with her own name, a woman who is in financial distress, and one searching for divinity within herself.



*@One Paramount, Porur. September 14, 4pm to 10 pm. Tickets available on [ticketprix.com](https://www.ticketprix.com).*



**Festive line**  
Rui Boutique, Mumbai, will present their latest festive collections at a three-day exhibition. Exclusive salwar sets and kurtis in silk, cotton and terryvoil, will be on sale. @The Folly, Amethyst, Royapettah. September 12 to 14 from 10am to 8pm. For more details, call 9820227109.



**Onam fashion**  
On the occasion of Onam, Saanskrutie has a range of hand crafted ready-to-wear blouses on sale. The collection includes hand crafted cholis with Kutch work and mirror works. Also for sale are chanya cholis, skirts, dress materials, sarees, kurta, saris, readymade garments and jewellery.

*@Saanskrutie, CP Ramaswamy Road, Alwarpet, from 11am to 9pm till September 15. For details, call 9798861033.*



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That crazy shot

Meet Adam Bobrow, popular US table tennis commentator, on a mission to make his sport fun

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The snake is Adam Bobrow's weapon of mass destruction. Against his opponents, some of them amateurs and some professional, he uses it to devastating effect, leaving them dumbfounded.

Adam is not a soldier and he is not fighting a war. He is a table tennis commentator who also plays the game for fun. Among his many innovative shots is the snake, a shot that is played from way below the table, which makes the ball spin in the direction opposite of where you thought it was heading. For Adam – a passionate promoter of the game – it has almost become his sobriquet.

In Chennai for the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) championship recently, Adam is besieged by aspiring players who want him to teach them this unique 'snake shot'. "It feels like magic when the ball jumps. I make it as theatrical as possible with silly body moments," he smiles.

Adam is not the first to play it – professional TT players like Patrick Chila and Jan-Ove Waldner have used it in games and Swedish champ Truls Moregardh tried it during the recent Paris Olympics. But ever since Adam coined the word 'snake' to describe this particular shot during a commentary stint, it has become synonymous with him. "I spend a lot of time developing and practising this particular shot. A lot of people don't realise that table tennis involves a lot of spin too, which makes it exciting."

Adam's thriving YouTube channel, which has more than a million subscribers, has him playing with local TT players across the world. He even once embarked on a journey in a bid to find the 'What happened' guy, a player whose shocking reaction to a point became a popular meme across the world.

"I try to create an experience that people can relate to and in the process, have some fun," explains Adam. He has also played with some of the best professionals in the world, including French champ Alexis Lebrun, Indian champion Sharath Kamal and popular TT coach Antasia Rybka, among others. "These professionals... they are incredibly generous and take it easy with me. They probably look at me like this kid who is excited to show up at their parents' workplace."

When Adam is not creating such content, he is on the sidelines of every important tournament across the world, adding value to the sport with his words. Adam's goal is, in his own words, to spread joy with the game he dearly loves. "I keep thinking of new ways to make table tennis more digestible. I want more people to watch and play the sport, so it needs to be visually easy to digest. When the ball jumps – like it does with the snake – it helps to grab attention."



Spin is in  
Adam Bobrow.  
JOHAN SATHYADAS



For concert tickets, scan QR code

Enjoying the vibe  
Hiphop Tamizha Adhi.  
THAMODHARAN B

My office is full of my boys. Every day, work is fun because there are many interesting ideas. People said that a project like Kadaisi Ulaga Por is risky but we placed a lot of trust in our friendship and jumped right in

vibe. During our performances at Wembley (stadium in London) and in Malaysia, most people were standing up front and dancing along. If you want to have a really good experience, come with your gang and enjoy the vibe."

Adhi is among the first well-known independent musicians in the Tamil scene. Several early songs like 'Vaadi Pulla Vaadi', were created on a shoestring budget with a bunch of friends who the singer had known for years. He says that he is intent on ensuring that more interesting artistes in Tamil, shine. It is why he urges them to build a brand of their own. "Take away all the 'actor', 'director' tags and you're still left with an independent artiste in me. I want to be in touch with the community. This is why we started Underground Tribe."

Which stars from the scene today are on his playlist? "I listen to all the new stuff. I'm a rapper so I've also heard Paal Dabba, Asal Kolaar and MC Devesh. My playlist is full of independent artistes," he says.

Catch Hiphop Tamizha Adhi live in Chennai's YMCA Ground at 6.30pm (September 21) at Return of the Dragon: World Tour. Tickets are on insider.com. The concert is jointly presented by Torque entertainment and Raj melodies and is done in association with The Hindu.

Just one of the boys

Hiphop Tamizha Adhi gets ready to perform in Chennai after a break at the Return of the Dragon concert on September 21

"It is entirely ours and it feels like a visionary project.. [it moves] a little outside of my regular movies like PT Sir and Veeran where I play a boy next door. This feels like the next step for me. It is apocalyptic but will definitely have my trademark entertainment," he says.

Adhi adds that much of the shoot, with experienced professionals like Nassar and Natarajan "Natty"

Subramanian, has proved that interesting professional relationships are key to lasting friendships in the industry. That, and maintaining a gang of his own who he has relied on for years, since college. "My office is full of my boys. Every day, work is fun because there are many interesting ideas and a vision. People said that a project like Kadaisi Ulaga Por is risky but the boys said paathukalam."

While Adhi has other projects up his sleeve, music, which is his claim to fame, is still an active part of his life. It is why he is all set to perform in Chennai on September 21 as part of his world tour, Return of the Dragon.

A concert in Chennai presents several moments of excitement for the singer. He says that he has a set with several favourites including 'Sakkarakatti' and 'Ethir Neechal'. "It's going to be a



On the fast track

Hasika Neethi's earliest memories associated with music are walking around the house listening to songs on a Walkman. She would listen to Michael Jackson and Bryan Adams thanks to her mother, while her father introduced her to Guns N' Roses and classic rock bands.

Today, Hasika – who shuttles between the US and Chennai – opens concerts and is busy working on singles. In fact, her upcoming release is 'Take Control', a track that fuses modern pop influences and traditional Indian music. "It opens with the *nadaswaram*," says Hasika, "I see 'Take Control' as a song that would inspire people to focus on their own needs and well-being rather than being controlled by external pressures."

She will soon premiere 'Take Control' in concerts, in which she regularly performs covers and other independent songs. In Los Angeles, her daily schedule involves practising late into the night, which involves singing on a treadmill. "It really helps build vocal stability. I want to get to a place where I could do an entire show without any breaks," says Hasika, who is also an entrepreneur and has a background in law. She is also keenly looking at pursuing film music; composer AR Rahman is a big inspiration. "We share the same birthday, and it would be a dream to sing for him someday," she says.

- Srinivasa Ramanujam

Who is the Dosa King?  
Grooving to the 'Manasila' track from the upcoming Rajinikanth film Vettaian? After this film hits screens on October 10, its director, TJ Gnanavel, will move on yet another project, titled Dosa King. Backed by Junglee Pictures, this pan-Indian project is inspired by the rise and fall of the popular restaurant Saravana Bhavan, built by P Rajagopal, and Jeevajothi Santhakumar, who took on the powerful tycoon. The film is written by Gnanavel and Hemanth Rao, known for Kannada film Sapta Saagaradaache Eello. In a statement, TJ Gnanavel said, "I've been following Jeevajothi's story since my days as a journalist. Dosa King is a hard-hitting story that exposes how the system functions, with a focus on the crime and thriller aspects of the narrative. I want to explore the extreme situations of life and tell a deeper story with an untold perspective on the case."



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WHEN & WHERE  
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The Hindu Office

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