

MYLAPORE

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THE MAGIC NUMBER

Bureau of Energy Efficiency partners with Tangedco to nudge consumers to set their default AC temperature at 24 degree Celsius

P4



TEAM FROM CHENNAI AT SPOGOMI WORLD CUP 2025

The qualifying round of this trash collection contest was held at Marina Beach P7

Two-way traffic being allowed on Santhome High Road at certain hours



Only a day earlier, these vehicles would have been stopped in their tracks if they had proceeded a plank length into Santhome High Road. But it was May 9, the day the one-way on Santhome High Road, only-through-Loop Road rule was partially lifted.

At certain hours of the day, Santhome High Road would function as a two-way. In those times, motorists heading from Lighthouse to MRC Nagar can worm their way into Santhome High Road and need not take Loop Road as they were earlier required to.

With the new arrangement coming into force on May 9, 2025, Santhome High Road now oscillates between being two-way and one-way on the basis of rush hour and non-rush hour traffic. By this, motorists heading towards MRC Nagar have to take Loop Road (and not Santhome High Road) between 7.30 am and 11.00 and between 5.00 pm and 8.30 pm. In any hour outside of these time slots, they can take Santhome High Road as it would function as a two-way.

The images were taken late in the evening on May 9, 2025, well outside the stipulated rush-hour slots.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

A plane trip, resort experience for 10 young cancer survivors



Vaan Ulaa, an initiative by the Thenmozhi Memorial Trust, gave ten young cancer survivors from underprivileged backgrounds a chance to fly for the very first time. On April 26, 2025, the children boarded a flight from Chennai to Bangalore, opening up a new

chapter filled with joy, courage, and hope.

The send-off was attended by actor Samuthirakan, actress Sai Dhanshika, and television host Archana Chandhoke, who also accompanied the children during the journey. Actor Mime Gopi, ambassador of the Trust, joined them as well, offering support and encouragement, says a press release.

After landing in Bangalore, the children were taken to a resort where they spent the night. For many, it was their first time enjoying simple pleasures—playing outdoor games, trying swimming, and spending time away from hospitals. It was a chance to relax, have fun, and build new friendships in a safe and happy environment, the release says.

On April 27, the group flew back to Chennai, their hearts full of new experiences. “I felt like a bird above the clouds,” said Nashiek, a nine-year old boy. “I stepped into a swimming pool for the first time,” shared Keerthika S, who is 12 years old, the release adds.

“Vaan Ulaa is not just about travel, it’s about rebuilding confidence and showing these children that their dreams can take flight,” said Arun Kumar M, founder of the Trust, which was started in memory of his mother, Thenmozhi.

The Trust has impacted over 10,000 lives and plans to make Vaan Ulaa an annual event, with future programmes focusing on mentoring and holistic support for young survivors, says the release.

A taste of summer



This ice apple seller in Alwarpet is doing brisk business.
Photo: SRINATH M



In 'Then and Now' we feature roads that have fallen from grace as well as those that have improved considerably

Link Road back to wearing 'grubby rags'

There were ostentatious efforts to give Link Road a new look. And it managed to receive a makeover; but now all the good work seems to have been undone



Pictures from May 7 and 8, 2025 show the degradation that the road has undergone; a lone image from June 27, 2024 shows the road in a better light.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



THEN AND NOW

PRINCE FREDERICK

Link Road, the one connecting Ethiraj Salai in Egmore and Dams Road in Anna Salai was a synonym for grubbiness.

The road would attract discards quietly deposited under cover of darkness. It would sport unseemly heaps of debris.

Then Greater Chennai Corporation seemed to have penned a new script for Link Road. The road received a scrub, one that looked almost thoroughgoing. It was also gifted a new pavement on the side where it matches strides with Cooum. Saplings of multiple species adorned this pavement.

As it has turned out, the script is truncated, and Link Road has gone back to being squalid all over again.

Images of the road taken on May 7 and 8 present tell-tale signs of neglect by Greater Chennai Corporation.

The weeds have "smothered" the saplings

and threaten to carry the pavement captive. The road is back to entertaining discards.

A huge slather of food waste was lying on the pavement giving off a nauseating smell, one that could knock a corpse dead many times over.

A stray dog had waded into a pile of discarded upholstery and found an unlikely snack. Its face lodged entirely in a plastic cover, the was licking clean, the leftover in the cover.

When Link Road presented a cleaner version of itself, there was a sneaking thought that it might witness the revival of an old initiative.

Many summers ago, this road was designated as a vending zone, with shops being marked on the compound wall on the other side (the one opposite the Cooum side).

But the vendors would have none of it. Link Road was not in people's regular commuting route. Nor was it a stretch fitness-walkers took to. The road was not part of any residential patch.

The floating population the road entertained had to do with motorists who took the road to beat the traffic on Anna Salai.

When Link Road had been spruced up which was over a year ago, possibilities abounded.

An attempt could have been made to revive the old idea of a vending zone, provided enough was done to ensure greater footfall.

Enhancing it aesthetically, the road could have been turned into a health track, thereby ensuring a steady flow of people who could serve as customers to roadside shops.

Given GCC's reluctance to honour the road with a consistent maintenance log for it, these possibilities stay on as possibilities that are unlikely to be realised.

The rot did not set in suddenly: close to a year ago, *The Hindu Downtown* warned of weeds growing around some of the newly planted saplings, illustrating the neglect of saplings with an image from June 27, 2024.

The weeds having gained the upper hand, the useful plants seem to be growing around them.

And what seemed a lost synonym for grubiness and apathy has been reclaimed, unfortunately.

STATUS REPORT

READERS WRITE



'Increase the display screen's font size'

At Chennai Metro Rail stations across the city, the font size of the display screen at the entry and exit gates is not friendly to senior citizens. I am referring to the screen that displays the remaining amount when entering the terminal and the balance after a journey. I am a senior citizen and have difficulty seeing the letters on the screen.

Commuters, especially senior citizens, have to ask the staff at the ticket counters for the remaining balance every time.

We have to wait in line at busy stations for a long time. If there is no sufficient balance, the wait is reasonable. We can either charge or top up the card.

I have made complaints in this regard to the CMRL staff, who said they would look into this issue and rectify it.

P. Sathyaranayanan is a social activist, a resident of Guindy, and a member of the Senior Citizens' Forum in Chennai.

Footpath caves in



A damaged footpath near Island Grounds. This image was taken on May 9. PHOTO. RAGU R

A green synergy

The latest batch of compost to emerge from the lane composters at Kasturba Nagar is growing the greens at a farm in Kottivakkam, East Coast Road. Wasted 360 Solutions made this possible

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

In a case of synergy, three entities representing three different constituencies of the green economy recently carried out a "transaction" defined by an abundance of goodwill.

It is a loose equivalent of what one would call "entente" in international politics – gestures marked by friendship and support. Here, there were what appeared to be business moves, but they were aimed at offering support to the one who needed it, and were free of any intentions of profit. Thanks to this, the latest compost to emerge from the lane composters at Kasturba Nagar is growing the greens at a farm



in Kottivakkam.

When Residents of Kasturba Nagar Association (ROKA) harvested its fifth cycle of composting, the compost was going into packets for sale. Down the line, ROKA realised it has to sell its compost to cover a part of the costs of running the lane composters.

"From the third cycle onwards, we started selling the compost at ₹10 per kg, each pack holding 10 kg

of compost," says Janani Venkitesh of ROKA.

ROKA has now harvested its fifth cycle of harvest. "Forty to fifty kg of compost was given to residents of Kasturba Nagar; they were on a priority list. And around 200 kg of compost went to Kazhani Native Farms in Kottivakkam on East Coast Road. Ann Anra of Wasted 360 Solutions bought the compost and donated it to Kazhani Farms.



The lane composters at Kasturba Nagar and (below) Kazhani Farms at Kottivakkam.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Wasted 360 Solutions has a dry waste drop off point at Kazhani Farms," says Janani.

Ann Anra of Wasted 360 Solutions weighs in:

"At Wasted 360 Solutions, we focus more on dry waste sorting and collection and aggregation, whereas organisations like Namma Ooru Foundation and communities like ROKA that do decentralised waste management for expertise in wet waste. We also work with SWMS to give waste to the CNG plant. But why I particularly have always been interested in compost is that it is the perfect solution and Indians are already good at making it. We had taken a training programme for about 250 beneficiaries (from an unskilled labour con-

stituency) to get them to become experts in composting, making bio enzymes and essentially impart to them the ability to work with both wet and dry waste, gain sorting capacity. Getting them started on these processes (composting and bio-enzyme making, sorting waste and reclaiming recyclables), which obviously have a money component attached to them, we were thinking about connecting and buying back the material (compost being one of them). While thinking in these terms, we heard about ROKA's harvest being really good and when I was speaking to Kazhani Farms, they said they needed two to three tonnes of compost a month. So, we footed the bill, buying the 195 kg of compost from ROKA which offered it to us at a discount, for Kazhani Farms. Because Kazhani Farms has been nice enough to offer us a free space in Kottivakkam for our dry waste drop-off."

On the lane-composting initiative in Kasturba Nagar, Janani says: "The lane composters are a part of the wider We Segregate waste management project in Kasturba Nagar, Adyar.

"The project is funded by the Urban Ocean program and nurtured by Okapi Research & Advisory, ROKA and Chennai Resilience Centre with the support of on ground partners - the Greater Chennai Corporation, Urbaser Sumee, Spreco Recycling and the Bisleri's Bottles for Change initiative."

A city where air conditioners take a battering

Its coastal location makes Chennai attractive, but there is a flip side to it: salty air and high humidity, factors that are not friendly to air-conditioners

LIFFY THOMAS

A family living at an independent house in MRC Nagar is feeling the heat, ironically on account of an air-conditioner. Five years old, it has stopped working and is unserviceable. Buy a new one or replace the outdoor unit – the service company has told the family.

Not a peculiar case in Chennai: the city's high humidity and salty air from the long coastline take a toll on ACs faster. In localities close to sewage treatment plants and the Cooum, copper pipes in the indoor AC unit are hugely corrosion-prone. Weakened copper components lead to leakage of gas and reduced efficiency of the AC unit. Many residents have been told by service technicians that fumes coming from sewage released from pumping stations lead to wear and tear of components.

Last summer, D. Bhuvanesh from Telephone Nagar in Perungudi invested in an AC that came with a five-year warranty. "That was a calculated decision as we were spending a lot on repairing ACs as they are vulnerable to corrosion in our area. Sometimes each service would cost me ₹3,000 and once to change the coil we had to shell out ₹8,000," says Bhuvanesh.

An average split AC is built to last for 10 to 15 years but that is changing. The Central Government is also working on schemes to nudge consumers to replace old ACs with new five star models that are more energy-efficient.

Ashwin Kumar, director, Techno Air Conditioners, says five to seven years is a decent lifespan for a residential AC unit in

Chennai if it has functioned without much of a hiccup.

He says saltwater is one big enemy for copper coils that are a key component in the outdoor unit of AC, making them more susceptible to damage from corrosion.

"What the motherboard is to the computer, the compressor is to the AC. It plays a direct and indirect role on the unit's performance. The type of gas that we are feeding into the compressor also plays a role. So when the compressor is overloaded the cooling coil is also impacted," says Ashwin.

Energy efficiency

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency recommends that all air-conditioned brands set their default temperature at 24 degree Celsius to ensure saving on electricity and to reduce carbon footprint.

"For the last two years, most of the major AC brands come with an inbuilt sticker in the indoor unit that states that 24 degree Celsius is the ambient temperature to be maintained, but more awareness about this feature needs to be created both by retail outlets and technicians," says Ashwin.

He says technicians have tools to check whether the flow of gas is happening, if the pumping system is working and whether the required fan speed is maintained.

For offices and commercial establishments where the capacity is between 50 and 100 tonnes, it pays to have a dedicated technician to handle the remote control or the central AC switch as frequent temperature adjustments can affect its lifespan, says Ashwin.

Can Chennai take lessons from this model?

BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (BYPL), a joint venture between Reliance Infrastructure Limited and the Government of Delhi, runs an AC replacement scheme with leading air conditioner manufacturers such as Havells, Godrej, Blue Star, LG, Voltas and O'General on board.

Open for residents of East and Central Delhi, the scheme encourages consumers to exchange their old ACs for new energy-efficient 5-star rated ACs at a discount of 60%.

The objectives of the scheme include reduction in the summer peak load of BYPL, flattening of load curve and phasing out inefficient non-star rated ACs and increasing the adoption of BEE 5-star rated ACs, says a note on the website <https://www.bsesdelhi.com>.



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Bureau of Energy Efficiency partners with Tangedco to nudge consumers to set their default AC temperature at 24 degree Celsius

The magic number

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The next time you are operating an air conditioner remote look for the magic number 24 and make sure to have it as default setting. To nudge households and businesses to reduce power consumption and carbon emission, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Union Minister of Power, has launched a campaign to encourage people to use their ACs at a default setting of 24 degree Celsius.

In South India, Chennai is one of the key cities where this awareness drives will take off with the support of Tangedco as its nodal agency.

"We started the campaign through various methods and will soon extend it with the help of Tangedco, where they will hold meetings with various stakeholders including manufacturers and dealers involved in this segment to raise awareness," says Chandra Shekhar Reddy, media advisor southern states/UTs, BEE.

With 1.35 crore consumer base, Chennai is one of the largest in South India and therefore BEE is keen on having this drive in this city.

"With temperature increasing, demand for power is also rising and with Chennai's hot weather this drive is important to protect the environment as well," says Reddy.

According to BEE estimates, increasing the AC temperature by just 1°C can reduce electricity usage by up to 6%. If ACs are set at 24°C nationwide there would be up to 20 billion units of electricity that can be saved annually and carbon emissions could drop by 8.2 million tonnes per year.

Ahead of International Plant Health Day (May 12), a look at how an institution in Chennai has set a template for teaching regenerative farming practices to students

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

At APL Global School in Thoraipakkam, the classroom "extends" into the garden with a gardening initiative having travelled swiftly from the periphery of learning to the centre stage.

In 2017, it sprouted as a club initiative by Maya Ganesh, a multi-hyphenate with regenerative farming as one of her specialisations, and soon put out promising shoots that developed into study branches. The initiative now stands robust as a full-fledged regenerative gardening curriculum that reaches students of every grade in tailored and measured forms.

"We do not have traditional landscaping here," says Shalini N, architect and garden coordinator at APL. "Instead, we have turned our open spaces into edible landscapes. Every plant is chosen not for beauty, but for its utility and ecological value."

Ahead of International Plant Health Day (May 12), this initiative can serve as a reminder that ensuring plant health is ensuring human health and planet health.

The genesis

"It began as a club," recalls founder Gita Jagannathan, "but with Maya's vision and dedication, it soon evolved into a structured part of our curriculum. Environmental education is central to our ethos. We see farming not as an extracurricular activity but as a means to understand the self, society and the environment."

The regenerative gardening curriculum is multi-tiered to suit different learning stages.

Kindergarteners take "Garden Walks," exploring biodiversity in age-appropriate language.

Primary students get five to six annual sessions in organic farming.

Middle and senior school students can opt for deeper regenerative agriculture modules through the unique subject "Expressions".

Seed by seed

A live seed bank is central to APL's



A farm at the school



A tour of the farming activities at APL Global. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

regenerative agriculture initiative. Started after the pandemic, the bank preserves open-pollinated and heirloom seed varieties. "We never use hybrid seeds. Our seeds come from regenerative farmers across India – from Yarowayy

Farm, Hooga Seeds, and Sahaja Seeds," explains Shalini, who came on board in 2020 and now nurtures what was started and perfected by Maya ever since the latter moved out of Chennai.

Each seed undergoes a cycle of



seeds in our bank were saved by our special education students," says Shalini. The tactile and repetitive nature of seed sorting helps them build focus, motor skills, and a sense of accomplishment. Their labels – often handwritten – now mark jars filled with red pumpkin, beans, ridge gourd and more.

The garden also doubles as a living lab. Biology students observe plant anatomy first-hand. Photography Club captures dew-drenched greens. Global Perspectives classes use composting to teach sustainability. Pencil shavings, once discarded, now become compost experiments. The soil, like the curriculum, is always alive.

The seed bank is also inclusive in access, not just in participation. Any teacher, parent or student who wants to start a home garden can take seeds freely. "All we ask is that they send back a few seeds if their crop grows well," says Shalini. "That way the cycle continues."

Harvest days

The School Garden Produce Sale is a small yet vibrant initiative that functions much like a mini-marketplace, exclusively within the school campus. Held on alternate Fridays, this event is designed to share the seasonal bounty of the school's garden with the school community, while subtly promoting sustainability, healthy eating and awareness about farm-to-table concepts.

Each cycle begins with a harvest day, typically managed by the garden team. A list of fresh items – ranging from herbs, greens, and vegetables to the occasional processed product like turmeric powder – is compiled and circulated via email to the teachers. "The response is always overwhelming," says Shalini. "The produce sells out in ten minutes," says Shalini. "Prices are nominal – ₹10 to ₹45."

APL's commitment to regenerating farming practices is spilling over beyond its campus. "We have submitted a proposal to the Tamil Nadu education department," says Gita, "suggesting that every school in the state have a farming space – just like rainwater harvesting was once mandated."

The team is also ready to assist other institutions. "We offer support for design, seed sourcing, and setup," says Shalini. "We are open to workshops too, if there is interest."

The section of Great Salt Lake in Kalavakkam on OMR is relatively under-birded; here is fresh reason for birders to be regular in visiting this patch, particularly during the migratory season



WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY (MAY 10)

A hat trick

PRINCE FREDERICK

Sample these scenarios where the least expected – or the unthought – happens against a fast-ticking clock, ushering in fresh joy.

A result-altering three back-to-back goals in the additional moments of a football match. Three sixes in a row in the final over of a 20-20 tipping the scale. Or, three less-seen migratory birds sighted on the same day within inches of each other, at the tail-end of a wintering season.

Sathish Kumar, an IT professional during the week and a birder during the weekend, experienced the very last scenario.

His jaw dropped during a birding trip to Great Salt Lake (GSL) last weekend and it is yet to snap back to its normal position.

On May 3, 2025, at the salt pans in GSL opposite SSN College in Kalavakkam, Sathish saw a Gull-billed tern, a Slender-billed gull and a Spotted redshank.

He has photographed all three with the Slen-

der-billed gull and the Spotted redshank even filling one frame.

Sathish Kumar considers the sighting of the Spotted redshank extraordinary. It was a ‘lifer’ to him. In birding terms, a lifer marks the first time someone sees a particular bird species in the field.

The Spotted redshank and Common redshank have more similarities than dissimilarities, but the latter are sufficiently pronounced for a birder to not confuse one for the other.

When Sathish saw the lone Spotted redshank, there were a few Common redshanks in the waters too.

The Spotted redshank he spotted on May 3 had slipped into its breeding plumage.

In its breeding plumage, from crown to belly, including the nape and throat, the Spotted redshank develops a deep dark grey. Its legs also replace red with dark grey.

One of the diagnostic features distinguishing it from the Common redshank (also a winter visitor in these parts): the colour and the shape of the beak.



A Slender-billed gull; a Spotted redshank and a Gull-billed tern at Great Salt Lake opposite SSN College in Kalavakkam on Rajiv Gandhi Salai on May 3, 2025.

PHOTOS: SATHISH KUMAR

In the Common redshank, the beak is shorter, and the black and the red are distributed uniformly between the upper and lower mandibles. The base of the beak is red and the tip, black. In the Spotted redshank, the beak is longer, thinner and the tip sharper, and the lower mandible has a touch of red at the base. The rest of the lower mandible and the whole of the upper mandible are black.

Another feature of the Spotted redshank is the slight curve to the beak.

PLAN YOUR WEEK

Zoo ambassador camp

The Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur will conduct its yearly ‘Zoo Ambassador Camp 2025’ for students of Classes V and above in five batches in May and June.

The camp will be held on these days – May 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 and 31; and June 4 and 5. Online registration is mandatory.

Parents are requested to arrange transport for their children and provide them with water bottles, snacks and fresh-cut fruits. For more details, log on to <https://aazp.in/summer-camp2025/>

Culinary workshop

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre, Guindy, is conducting a culinary workshop on May 15.

The session will focus on cuisines made from millets which include: foxtail millet, finger millet, pearl millet, and barnyard millet. The workshop will focus on sweets, savouries and tea-time meals such as *idli*, *dosa*, *puttu*, *adai*, *upma*, and *kozhukattai*, says a press release.

Another workshop on mushroom cultivation will be held on May 16. Both the sessions will be held at the centre’s premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For registration and other details, call 044 - 29530048.

Inviting students to make a video of Chitlapakkam lake

Chitlapakkam Rising, a citizens guardians group, is inviting students to make a video to tell a story titled “Our Lake – Our Pride.” The video should capture the beauty of Chitlapakkam Lake in three to six minutes and it should be uploaded on social media with the tag #SavingChitlapakkamLake and #MakingChitlapakkamBetter.

There will be prizes for both school and college students, said a release. The last date to submit entries is May 25. Each contestant can submit multiple versions. For details, call Sunil Jayaram at 95001 22151.

CUMTA celebrates Tamil Week

As part of Tamil Week celebration, Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) conducted various competitions for its staff last week. According to a press release, the event was held with the support of the Department of Tamil Development & Information. The competitions included essay writing, quiz, oratory, and storytelling. The Special Officer of CUMTA, I. Jayakumar, honoured the winners with prizes and certificates.

The press release notes the event was organised following the Chief Minister’s announcement on April 22 at the Legislative Assembly that Tamil Week will be celebrated from April 29 to May 5 in honour of the Tamil poet and writer Pavendar Bharathidasan who was born on April 29.



Team from Chennai to represent India in Spogomi World Cup 2025

The qualifying round of this trash collection contest was held at Marina Beach

A team from Chennai has qualified for the Spogomi World Cup 2025 finals scheduled to be held in October at Tokyo.

Sharun A., Abishek K. V. and Manivannan Thiyyagu were recently declared national qualifiers for this event to represent India. The Nippon Foundation Spogomi World Cup 2025 India Qualifiers was held on April 27 at the Marina Beach, near Kannagi statue.

A regional qualifier was conducted at Kempambudhi Lake in Bengaluru on March 30.

Spogomi is a global sport in which teams



Waste scattered on the sands of Marina Beach near Labour Statue. PHOTO: HARINI S

of three members each compete to see who can collect the most amount of trash in an hour. The collected trash is then segregated, based on which points are awarded.

The top five teams from Bengaluru were invited to participate in the National Qualifiers in Chennai and provided with travel and accommodation, said a release.

This year, in addition to travel and accommodation, the teams with the best team names received special prizes, and there was a cosplay contest conducted in parallel to the main event. The winner, Nandhakumar S, cosplayed the character Monkey D. Luffy from "One Piece", will accompany the winning team to Tokyo, added the release. The cosplay contest was judged by Roshini Sekar, Raghul Sekaran and Saathvik Kannan.

'Young Maratha' awards presented on Maharashtra Day



The Maharashtra Association in Chennai celebrated Chatrapathi Shivaji Jayanthi and Maharashtra Day on May 1 at Sanskrit College auditorium. R. Sridhar, former professor of Mathematics of Matsciences was honoured with "Great Maratha" award. The chief guest was Dr. Sudha Seshayyan, former vice chancellor of The Tamilnadu Dr. MGR Medical University. She also honoured six outstanding children with Young Maratha awards. Dr Sudha gave an informative lecture on Chhatrapathi Shivaji.

Book launched

'Mylai Karpagavalli Pillai Tamizh' written by Meenakshi Bal Ganesh was released at an event held in Mylapore. Meenakshi is a research scholar in Tamil doing her research on Pillai Thamizh. The book was released by U.V. Subramanian. Other guests who attended the book release function included Kilambur Sankaran Subramanian, editor, Kalaimagal; Seetha Ravi, former editor, Kalki; J. Mohan, publisher; and Poosai Atchilingam of Sivasundari magazine, said a release.

Textile outlet opened at Central railway station

The Commercial Branch of Chennai Division, Southern Railways has opened a sales outlet of a private textile manufacturer at Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Railway Station on May 9. According to a press release, it is an effort to enhance revenue generation by utilising the premises of the railways. The textile showroom, located at the new concourse area of the station, has a five year licence.

K. Beji George, Principal Chief Commercial Manager and other railway officials took part in the inauguration of the store, the press release adds.

Special buses for Chithirai Pournami

In view of 'Chithirai Pournami', Tamil Nadu State Express Transport Corporation is operating special buses to the pilgrimage town of Tiruvannamalai on May 11 and 12.

The Corporation will operate around 1,156 buses on May 11 and 966 buses on May 12 from a bus terminus at Kilambakkam.

Close to 300 buses will operate from Madhavaram. Forty air-conditioned buses (with bed and seating facilities) will ply on these two days from Kilambakkam.

The passengers can book tickets through www.tnstc.in and the mobile app.

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Healing through art

To create awareness about multiple sclerosis, the Chennai chapter of a pan-India group has kickstarted an event. May 30 is observed as World Multiple Sclerosis Day



BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Sujatha Karthik's hands felt numb than usual while waiting to wield the brush. Her right leg was acting up. And a cough was not helping matters. The scene shifted and the change was dramatic when she joined 50 other participants in the room to sketch neuron-like lines and shapes.

"For 45 minutes, I forgot all the emotions I carried with me to immerse myself in drawing. I felt relaxed," says Sujatha, a Velachery resident and a mother of two.

Since being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2020, Sujatha had not bothered to "trouble" her painting brushes, and she went into this drawing effort rusty.

Multiple Sclerosis Society of India Chennai chapter organised an art session on May 3, 2025 at the Bosch office off Greams Road, offering those with MS a platform to express emotions, release inner tension and reframe their thoughts. The workshop was a prelude to the World MS Day (May 30). No prior experience of painting was needed.

Common symptoms such as



Snapshots of the workshop held on May 3.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

muscle weakness, numbness, fatigue, and difficulty with coordination and balance and blurred vision discourage those with MS from pursuing art as a therapy.

Therapists say any art when pursued by those with neurological disorders can help increase their confidence levels.

Sathya Ganapathi, who facilitated the workshop, chose neurographic art, developed by Russian psychologist Pavel Piskarev for its free-flowing method that is fun and meditative.

Meenakshi Nandakumar, a yoga therapist and a person with MS, says they need more artists

organising such workshops.

Ann Gonzalvez, chairperson, MSSI Chennai, says multiple sclerosis affects cognition and also causes depression.

"These are just two of the many invisible symptoms associated with MS. We at MSSI Chennai Chapter chose art as a medium to deal with these symptoms," says Ann. She adds, "The chapter welcomes those with MS to attend its monthly meetups and participate in occupational and art therapies that will empower them to lead quality lives."

For details, visit www.mssociety-india.org

Art is an important treatment modality that occupational therapists adopt in treating patients with clinical depression, which can be applied to neurological diseases and neurogenerative disorders. The activities that help with emotions include journaling, line art, postcard designing, creating a family sculpture with clay and drawing feelings in a heart formation.

WHAT THEY SAY

'Warli art to elevate the mood'

During the pandemic, I taught members of Parivarthan for Parkinson, warli art, which I chose as it can elevate and enhance even a simple design. Drawing and filling those simple, geometric patterns with colours is also an exercise apt for those with Parkinson's Disease.

In authentic warli, we mainly work around with one colour, so I ask them to choose their favourite, any medium to bring about a feel good factor. There are plenty of short YouTube tutorials that can help one learn how to draw warli art on white paper. One just has to make sure the art is easy and the outcome is nice.

Himani Bhatnagar, freelance artist

'Scribbling can be fun'

I avoid going with a plan while conducting a workshop for a new audience. In this case, I was conducting a session for persons with multiple sclerosis for the first time so I adapted the neurographic art to suit the group.

Brush pens were chosen as they are easy on the hands (colour pencils can be difficult to hold; water colours can be spilt; and thin sketch pens can be difficult to grip).

I chose pastel shades of the colours so that they are not too harsh. Colours have a soothing effect on the mind.

Neurographic art comprises free flowing lines from one end of the paper to the other and it can be practised at home.

One does not have to go looking for an art instructor. I suggest people explore whatever they are curious about.

Buy colouring books for adults and choose any medium one is comfortable with. Scribbling can be fun.

Sathya Ganapathi, freelance graphic designer who works with special children and a yoga therapist

'Art therapy helps self-expression'

on the person, but one must be provided with the tools or supplies so that the person is able to express emotions and explore thoughts. We have seen that art therapy helps one express better, thereby improving mood and social interactions.

Sarah Daniel, occupational therapist

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Russian Education Fair ends today

A two-day All-India Russian Education Fair for the academic year 2025-2026 will conclude on May 11 at Russian Centre of Science and Culture. Eight leading higher educational institutions, all belonging to the Russian government are taking part. The fair offers as many as 10,000 MBBS seats for Indian students, said a release.

Spot admissions for MBBS and other programmes can be made at the fair, which is scheduled to take place also in many locations in Tamil Nadu. For details, call 9282 221 221.