

ANNA NAGAR

Purasawalkam » Villivakkam » Kolathur » Nazarathpettai » Pattabiram » Maduravoyal » Koyambedu » Tiruverkadu » Puzhal » Kilpauk » Perambur » Mogappair

Avadi » Ayyapakkam » Tiruninravur » Nerkundram » Moolakadai » Ayanavaram » Retteri » Padi » Ambattur » Tirumullaivoyal » Aminjikarai » Vysarpadi » Red Hills



ROLL OUT INTO THE STREETS

As GCC is preparing a road between two MRTS stations for road-skating sessions at certain hours of the day, here is why more such arrangements have to be made without delay **P5**



PULLING AN ARTWORK OUT OF THE BIN

Amidst a crowd of attention-grabbing messages, how can the less popular but essential message of composting find an audience? Two climate-action advocates in Chennai have the answer **P6**

‘Expedite Ganesapuram flyover construction’

The slow progress of the work has a ripple effect in the region causing traffic congestion in various parts; the fact that two other routes are hampered by infrastructure works does not help matters

A.S. ASOGAN

Even as the Ganesapuram flyover in Vysarpadi has been reopened, one cannot help being disappointed over the tardy pace at which the flyover at Ganesapuram is being constructed.

In addition to Murasolimarani flyover on Perambur High Road - North and Basin Bridge (via Vysarpadi market), Ganesapuram marks a key route for residents of Moolakadi, Madhavaram, Kolathur, Thiru Vi Ka Nagar to access the city's central and southern parts.

The construction of Ganesapuram flyover began in January 2023 and was expected to be ready in 24 months. But the work is moving at a snail's pace. And here is why it is important that Ganesapuram flyover work should be expedited.

construction. But nothing is being done to curb parking of vehicles near the construction site. A row of autorickshaws is parked in front of the Perambur railway station. Besides, a good number of restaurants, bakeries and other shops are found near the construction site. None of them have parking facilities. Stringent measures against unauthorised parking will go a long way towards decongesting the area.

Basin Bridge route is known for traffic congestion. But due to ongoing infrastructure projects at Ganesapuram and Perambur High Road - North, traffic has increased in Basin Bridge.

Residents of this region are tired of enduring traffic diversion and congestion.

A.S. Asogan is a resident of Perambur

The other two routes

Perambur High Road - North has narrowed on account of metro rail

Traffic congestion near Perambur railway station.

PHOTO : B.JOTHI RAMALINGAM



Shenoy Nagar playground reopened



Greater Chennai Corporation's playground at Kamarajar Street in Shenoy Nagar sports a new look following the redevelopment work carried out by Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority at a cost of ₹ 10.56 crore. Spread across 4.265-acres, Paavendar Bharathidasan Playground, as the facility is called, reopened a week ago. The playground has been provided with dedicated courts for football, basketball and volleyball; and an indoor gym. A gallery is another new feature of the redeveloped playground. The playground falls under Ward 102 in Zone 8 - Anna Nagar. Prominent landmarks to locate the playground are: Shenoy Nagar metro rail station, Thiru Vi Ka park, and Office of the Zone 8 - Anna Nagar of the Greater Chennai Corporation.

Mint Street library gets bigger and better

CMDA has set up Mudhalvar Padaippagam at the government library



L. KANTHIMATHI

The State Government-run library at Mint Street (also known as Thanga Salai) at George Town was reopened a week ago after months of redevelopment.

Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority redeveloped the library at a cost of ₹ 47 lakh.

Besides, a co-working facility has been established at this library under Mudhalvar Padaippagam, one of the flagship projects of the State Government.

According to library officials, the area of the library has been increased by annexing a portion from the adjoining school run by Greater Chennai Corporation. Further, ergonomically designed chairs have been provided.

The library has a collection of



The library at Mint Street.

17,740 books and its membership count stands at 676.

The decades-old library earlier lost in the bustle marking Mint Street now stands distinct with its new look and one cannot miss it. Still, the existence of such an useful facility should be highlighted by installing signboards at the entrance of Mint Street.

Mint Street stretches from NSC Bose Road to Memorial Hall Road. And this library is located near the junction of Mint Street and Memorial Hall Road.

The nearest public transport stations to access the library are:

Chennai Central metro railway station (E2 entrance), Central suburban railway station, Park Town railway station, and Broadway bus terminus.

Prominent landmarks to locate the place where the library is located include Office of the Divisional Railway Manager – Chennai Division on South Mint Street and Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on Poonamallee High Road.

The library functions from 8 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. It is closed on Fridays, second Saturdays and on government holidays.

Set paws in this church today

St. Sebastian's Church in Madhavaram will have a special blessing for pets to commemorate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint for animals

LIFFY THOMAS

The premises of St. Sebastian's Church in Madhavaram will turn into a mini-sanctuary on October 5. At 11 a.m. there will be a special prayer followed by blessing of pets, a tradition followed by this catholic church for some years now to celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi (on October 4 every year), the patron saint of ecology.

As in previous years, pets including cats, dogs, parrots and love birds are expected to line up for the blessing. "Last year, we had close to 50 pets assembled outside the church for the blessing," says Fr. Micheal Anand, parish priest. He says a majority of those coming for the special blessing are from the parish but they do not say no to outsiders.

The "selfie booth" created for this occasion is the highlight where



visitors can take pictures of themselves with their animals with the image of the patron saint in the backdrop.

The church (since 1953) comes under the Order of Friars Minor, which was founded by St. Francis of Assisi, a saint from the 13th century known for his love for animals as much for people. Most churches under this congregation celebrate the feast, opening it for pets as a re-

minder of the need to live sustainably and in harmony with nature. For pet parents, it is an occasion to seek a blessing for the animals that serve as their companions.

"This year also marks the 800th year of the composition of the revolutionary song 'Canticle of Creatures' that provides the world a new perspective of the universe, acknowledging every creature on earth as brother and sister. It offers lessons on finding joy, God's presence in all creation, and to care for the creation with loving and familial relationship," says Fr. Anand.

Besides this annual event, during Mattu Pongal some families in Madhavaram seek blessings for the farm animals they rear at home, says Fr. Anand.

The Church will continue to remind the parishioners about importance of conserving the environment with events through the month including an exhibition.



Images from the previous year.



'These electricity boxes are unsafe'

Most of the electricity boxes of Tamil Nadu Generation & Distribution Corporation Limited (TANGEDCO) at Thanthondriya Amman Koil Extension in Villivakkam are poorly maintained and the risk of untoward incidents is high. Complaints to the authorities did not yield the desired result. As north-east monsoon is round the corner, these boxes should be made safe.

N. Amaran
Villivakkam

'Pond in a state of neglect at Anna Nagar Tower park'

The pond at Dr Visvesvaraya Tower Park in Anna Nagar is poorly maintained. Alcohol bottles and all kinds of plastic waste are found in it. Further, an unpleasant odour emanates from the pond on some days. Greater Chennai Corporation should ensure the pond is maintained well.

Yashika V,
Anna Nagar



CTH Road near Canara Bank bus stop in Ambattur. PHOTOS: AKHILA EASWARAN

'Pedestrians in peril in Ambattur'

Pedestrians find it difficult to cross the section of CTH Road near Canara Bank bus stop in Ambattur. It is a narrow bend and the spot witnesses heavy traffic, especially during rush hour. Pedestrian movement is high because Ambattur railway station is located in the vicinity. Appropriate safety measures need to be put in place.

K.V. Saikrishna
Ambattur



You can be our volunteer-writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues and events in your neighbourhood. You should send the write-ups to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in. Letters must carry the contact number.

'Electricity boxes need to be kept at a safe height'

Electricity pillar boxes are located on the ground at Jai Nagar 21st Street in Arumbakkam. This street is prone to waterlogging during rains. These boxes should be raised to a safe height. This will reduce the number of power cuts during north-east monsoon.

N ChittiBabu,
Arumbakkam



'Bus shelter or parking lot?'

This bus stop (as shown in the image) on MTH Road in Villivakkam has a shelter, seats and a ramp. But it is misused for parking of vehicles. Authorities should take necessary measures to curb such practices. Buses towards Padi halt at this stop.

Raghukumar Choodamani,
Perambur



The junction of MTH Road, Ambedkar Salai and Konnur High Road in Villivakkam. PHOTO: AKHILA EASWARAN

'Speed breakers are needed near key junction in ICF'

The traffic signals are set in operation at the junction of Konnur High Road, MTH Road and Ambedkar Salai near ICF bus terminus in Villivakkam during rush hour. And during lean hours, the signals are disabled as the junction does not witness

heavy traffic and motorists are expected to exercise caution while driving. But most of the motorists drive at a reckless speed. Close calls are common. Speed breakers are needed near the junction.

M. Senthil,
Villivakkam

Construction of FOB under way in Aminjikarai,



▼ A foot overbridge on Poonamallee High Road near Nelson Manickam Road junction is nearing completion. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

'Ramps put pedestrians at risk'

Ramps of buildings encroaching the public roads have become quite common. The base level of the buildings is constructed at a raised level to prevent stormwater from entering their premises. And ramps are constructed over the footpaths to access the road. While this benefits the occupants of such buildings, it compromises the safety of pedestrians.

Fifth Street at H Block in Anna Nagar West is an example. Such encroachments have blocked the footpaths forcing pedestrians to step onto the busy street which wit-



nesses heavy vehicular traffic. Greater Chennai Corporation should take stringent measures against such encroachments.

Jayakumar Daniel, Anna Nagar



Jai Nagar First Main Road in Arumbakkam on Thursday. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

'SWD work moves at snail's pace in Arumbakkam'

Reconstruction of stormwater drain commenced this June at Jai Nagar First Main Road in Arumbakkam and is not complete yet. Besides, the nearby stormwater drains have not been desilted.

It should be noted the Greater Chennai Corporation's Mayor, the Regional Deputy Commissioner -

Central, and other GCC officials visited the road during the rainy season last year as it witnessed heavy water logging and they promised to do the needful. The reconstruction of the drain is a result of this visit. However, the work is progressing at a snail's pace and we are doubtful whether it would be completed before

the onset of the north-east monsoon.

This road witnesses heavy traffic as it connects two arterial roads: Jawaharlal Nehru Main Road and Poonamallee High Road and the slow pace of the work is testing the endurance of the public.

N ChittiBabu,
Arumbakkam,

Daan Ustav events in Chetpet this week

Yein Udaan celebrates Daan Ustav with a wide roster of events designed to connect individuals, corporates and communities through meaningful engagement. According to a press release from Yein Udaan, a voluntary organisation engaging with underprivileged section of Chetpet through education, has a week-long line-up of activities in Chetpet, offering participants an opportunity to experience the joy of giving through immersive, purposeful and memorable events.

On October 5, in the afternoon, there is a Thrift & Cloth Sale. Upcycled and pre-loved clothes and items would be available at a festive community sale. Employees of corporate houses can contribute items or volunteer at stalls. Proceeds support women's skilling programmes, says the release.

Other programmes on October 5: in the evening, there will be a Chetpet Community Walk. It will be a guided heritage walk showcasing Chetpet's rich history and everyday life. | CSR teams and participants can discover the community firsthand. Ticket proceeds support children's programmes.

Men's Community Evening (also on October 5) will feature a recreational evening of games and relaxation for community fathers. Corpo-

rates can co-host activities to promote positive male role models in families.

On October 6, in the morning, there will be a Treasure Hunt in the Community. It will be a gamified exploration of Chetpet with "kindness checkpoints", says the release, adding that donors can sponsor prizes; employee teams can participate for fun, teamwork, and immersion.

On October 7, Art & Craft Workshops including sessions on embroidery, water painting, and wire art will be conducted. Employees of corporate houses can collaborate with community artisans, supporting women's livelihood initiatives.

On October 7 & 8, there will be "YU at Your Office" Engagement Drive: Yein Udaan team visits corporate offices with student stories, handmade products, and awareness stalls.

Both October 11 and 12 | Sat/Sun will feature a Musical Evening & Sing-Along. On the cards is a lively evening of music featuring local artists and community children. | Corporate teams can sponsor the stage, sound or refreshments. It will mark a celebratory close to Daan Utsav at Yein Udaan, says the press release.

Applications invited

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation has invited applications for its one-year apprentice training. B.E., Diploma, and Non-Technical Stream (Undergraduate, Mechanical Engineering, Automobile Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, B.A., B.SC, B.Com, BBA, BBM and BCM) Tamil students, who have completed their degrees in the years, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 and 2025, can enrol.

The students should apply online (<https://nats.education.gov.in>) National Apprenticeship Training Scheme, Ministry of Education, Government of India, before October 18.

Dental camp held

Avichi Alumni Association organised a dental camp for students of Avichi Higher Secondary School.

According to a press release, around 700 students were screened for dental disorders. A medical team from SRM Dental College Hospital, Ramapuram conducted the camp. Students were also taught about dental hygiene.



Roll out into the streets

As GCC is preparing a road between two MRTS stations for road-skating sessions at certain hours of the day, here is why more such arrangements have to be made without delay

LIFY THOMAS

Recently Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner J. Kumaragurubaran in a post on X shared a video of children practising skating on the MRTS road between Perungudi station and Velachery station.

GCC, in coordination with Greater Chennai Traffic Police, will make the road impervious to motorised vehicular traffic for a few hours every day for skating and cycling, he announced in the post. Currently, “heavy vehicle arresters” have been fixed and a few leftover works are to be completed on this stretch.

While this should come as good news for academies scouting for ideal locations to train children in skating, seeing it implemented is

far from easy. This road has been used by young learners even before the pandemic for the minimum hindrance it presents.

Complaints by motorists when an entire carriageway of the road elsewhere is made out of bounds for them have meant that skaters have to scout for new location all over again. Manpower challenges in the police department to regulate such stretches mean this sport takes a backseat.

Three popular stretches sought by skating enthusiasts and training academies for road skating are: service lane on Marina Beach, near Light House; carriageway of Swami Sivananda Salai near MLAs Hostel; and Elliot’s Beach Road in Besant Nagar.

R. Pratap Kumar, president of Tamil Nadu Roller Skating Association, says despite many requests by the association none of these roads is officially given for practice sessions. “Before major competitions,

we manage to get permission but that is not enough. Sports needs regular practice and a dedicated place that is accessible and affordable to all,” says Pratap.

Skating academies only seek 1.5 to 2 hours in the morning hours to practise this sport. “The stretch has to be barricaded and police officials should patrol the stretch; volunteers will take care of the rest,” says Pratap, who was former Tamil Nadu State Information Commissioner. Of the 11 disciplines in skating, ‘road’ is one of them which is

why a city needs to provide the infrastructure. A tar surface is preferred over a cemented one.

“In December, Chennai will be hosting the 63rd National Roller Skating Championship but we have only taken six disciplines. As we do not have the infrastructure for ‘road’ and ‘rink’ category, these events will be held in Bengaluru,” he says.

Other cities

Chandigarh, he says, is one of the

Screenshot of the post on X by GCC Commissioner; children warm up before a practice session on the road near Perungudi MRTS station; and file photo of an event at Swami Sivananda Salai.



best when it comes to road infrastructure for skating. “Many medal-winning skating aspirants go to cities such as Chandigarh and Bengaluru to practise before a meet as they have dedicated stretches,” he says. R.M. Anbunathan, a skating coach for more than two decades, agrees that finding an ideal location is a challenge and many a time they practise in neighbourhoods till residents raise an objection.

Currently, Anbunathan has managed to get permission from a senior police official to occupy 700 metres of the road at Swami Sivananda Salai in the morning between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m.

“Before we could do a full circuit of Swami Sivananda Salai covering 3.7 km. Now, 700 metres is what is permitted,” says Anbunathan who runs the Marina Academy of Speed Skating.

Skating coaches say Tamil Nadu is currently one of the top states in skating. Chennai District Unit is one of the biggest in roller skating in Tamil Nadu, and Chennai district holds many National and International medallists. There are more than 20 registered clubs, so to ensure this momentum is maintained the State government must accord importance to the sport.

“There are at least eight events in the road category including 100 mt, marathon, lap race, so we need affordable and safe space,” says the senior coach.

Arrangements should be made to support road skating wherever sports infrastructure is coming up in the city.

Two skating facilities promoted by private players in Medavakkam and Gerugambakkam are being accessed by many skating enthusiasts. While they are maintained well with good infrastructure, distance and the cost of availing the facility discourages many from adopting them.





Compost artworks, including the one titled 'Malar', from @onelittlepalette; Saraswathi Shanmugasundaram; and a sustainability diary. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing it is neither smelly nor dirty – simply soil in formation.

A starting point

Nilayaan, a community-focused environmental initiative that works to promote sustainable waste management, and composting practices takes compost art to boardrooms and classrooms, since 2022. Deepesh Bhaskar, founder of Nilayaan, believes compost art can be a powerful stating point in environment and climate education for children.

“The whole idea is to make children aware of composting in a unified and nature-centric way,” says Deepesh.

The adventure starts with a nature walk, where kids from Play-KG to 8th standard collect fallen leaves and twigs. “We do not let them pluck anything,” says Deepesh, “but they do get a handful of compost to work their magic.” Then, divided into groups and given themes inspired by the elements – air, water, fire, earth and space – they create art that literally grows from the ground up.

And here is the twist: most kids do not even realise they’re working with compost. “Towards the end, we reveal that the materials came from kitchen waste, and suddenly they are touching, smelling, and learning all about it,” Deepesh explains. It’s not just about making art; it’s about making the invisible world of microorganisms visible and fun.

In corporate wellness programmes, Nilayaan offers lessons in composting neatly wrapped in compost art. The overall theme of these sessions is “Composting Against Climate”.

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Green souls have to acknowledge reality. #compost will remain gently clicked. Composting advocates are voices in the wilderness, their messages often echoing back to themselves unheard. So, in a crowded digital space where more exciting hashtags, some of meretricious character, are being peddled, how can their message get noticed? Saraswathi Shanmugasundaram, a resident of an apartment at Luz in Mylapore and a composting advocate, offers an answer, actually demonstrates it. On her Instagram page @onelittlepalette, the hashtag #compostart is as profusely distributed as colourful Ixora in a rain-drenched garden.

Saraswathi, also wearing the work badges of an IT professional and yoga instructor, has experienced the misadventures pre-destined from every greenhorn compost enthusiast. Despite failing in the first few attempts at composting – one bin even got swept into a burglar’s heist bag – she stayed resiliently at the composting post and in time, became a composting evangelist. And just like that, she discovered compost could be a canvas; and that #compostart can bring the missing visibility to the green practice.

She recalls the discovery: “People usually sieve compost after the cycle finishes to remove small plastics like apple stickers or threads from puja flowers and to catch chunky particles for the next cycle. When I sieved compost, I would spread newspaper and sieve it out. It spread like a flat bed and looked like a black slate where you could write or place something, like scribbling on mud or sand. Touching and feeling the compost led me to think of drawing and creating art from it.”

The first sketches were simple smileys, but they gradually grew elaborate, festival motifs and seasonal designs entering the picture.

Pulling an artwork out of the bin

Amidst a crowd of attention-grabbing messages, how can the less popular but essential message of composting find an audience? Two climate-action advocates in Chennai have the answer

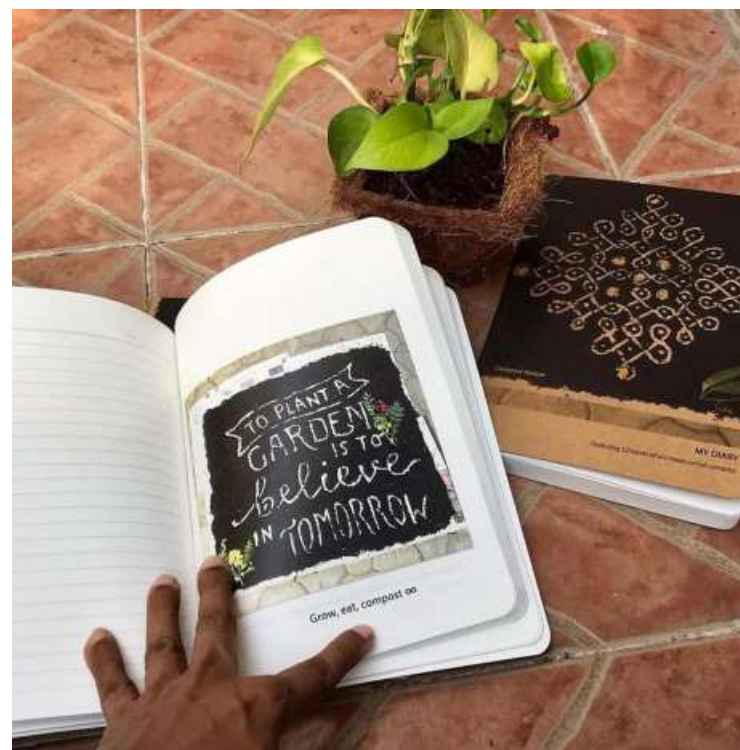


“To add colours, I use natural materials like fallen leaves, vegetable peels, flowers from the garden, sometimes fresh fruits or vegetable colours, everything that is compostable. Once the art is done, the compost goes to the plants and the materials used for colour go back into the compost bin or are washed if needed.”

During one Vinayaka Chaturthi, she experimented with moist compost. “I added water to the compost, but it crumbled and though that is how compost texture should be – crumbly but moist – it was not good enough to hold as an object. So I spread the sieved compost on a newspaper / old calendar sheets, and drew a picture of Ganesha.”

Saraswathi regularly posts videos of her #compostart on her YouTube channel (also “onelittlepalette”) and in Instagram reels. Her documented artworks and #compostart track record include Nature Cake made from compost for Forest & Bird, a New Zealand-based organisation, for its 100th year celebration, compost art stalls at Solitude Farm where people create their own designs and colourful installations at Rosary Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Mylapore, for its 75th-year celebrations. Her personal favourites include Malar, crafted entirely from composted puja flowers, and the simple Sunflower.

Her practice has also evolved into compost-art diaries, which she suggests make ideal gifts for anyone eco-conscious, artistically inclined, or curious about climate action. Each diary combines artwork with tips, snippets, and solutions about composting. Even in informal workshops, she encourages participants to “play” with compost, feeling its texture and realis-



DESIGN NOTES

‘Feed’ those ‘lions’ some paint

Take a look at these elements in the compound wall of the University of Madras campus

PRINCE FREDERICK

At best, it was meant to be an *amuse-bouche*, savoured before one had a taste of the intricate, heritage architectural design found on the other side of the compound wall. Calling it an *amuse-bouche* would in fact be an overly generous, even misleading description, if one knew the architectural repast inexplicably grander that is spread out inside.

This is an earthen design of four lion-faced creatures, open-mouthed and looking in four directions, built into a masonry pier. Two masonry piers with this design are in the compound wall marking off the southern boundary of the University of Madras campus. The lion-faced creatures (yallis could be apt term) look too “run-down” to successfully hunt for attention. It does not take much to rejuvenate them, and along with them the entire masonry piers: a lick of painting. The paint having worn off, the features of the creatures are not sufficiently decipher-



able now. Before the painting, they need some hairdressing. One set of them is sporting a collective, unlikely hairdo – a plantlet.

The compound wall on the eastern side of the campus, which constitutes its facade, is more presentable. This compound wall is an alliance between robust carved

granite stones and sturdy metal grilles. The same design sits atop two stone pillars, each found on one side of the campus’ main entrance. Being painted, they manage some attention. The lion-faced beings on the two masonry piers on the southern compound wall need to be “fed” some paint too.



On the compound wall at the University campus. The images were taken on October 3, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

In this column, the reader will come across minor elements of design in the city that are ignored but can enhance the landscape



Saint remembered

The 79th Urs of Hazrath Syed Hasan Moulana Baghdadi (RA) was held at the dargah premises in Mannady on September 28.

The commemoration began with Zikr (remembrance of God) and the recitation of Salaam upon Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The rituals included the traditional offering of sandal paste at the saint’s grave, followed by soulful recitations of

Hamd, Naat and Manqabat that continued late into the night.

Highlights of the Urs were the recitation of Qasidah Ghausiyah and Qasidah Burdah, the celebrated ode to the Prophet composed by the 13th-century poet Imam al-Busiri.

This saint is the 31st direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad through Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA) and is revered for his spiritual prowess, said a press release.

Rang Mahal exhibition

Like every year, Rang Mahal, which represents the conglomeration of West Bengal weavers from Nadia district, is back in the city. This is the 27th year since they have been visiting the city with their collection of handloom and handicrafts, said a release.

The exhibition-cum-sale starts on October 7 and will end on October 17 at C.P. Arts Centre in Alwarpet.

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'Dr. Jane Goodall DBE, *the Light that lit my path*'

Chennai resident Supraja Dharini recalls her long association with the conservationist



SUPRAJA DHARANI

The passing of Dr. Jane Goodall DBE marks the end of an era. And for me personally, the end of an inspiring association. Her life and words shaped the path that became 'TREE Foundation'. Without Dr. Jane, I might never have found the courage to dedicate my life to sea turtles and marine conservation.

In December 2001, as I walked along Periya Neelankarai beach,

near my home in Chennai, I saw a large creature on the beach. As I walked close to it, I realised it was dead. A fisherman nearby explained that it was an Olive Ridley, one of the ancient mariners who return to our beaches along India's east coast to nest every year between December and April. That encounter disturbed me deeply.

Only weeks earlier, I had watched a National Geographic documentary featuring Dr. Jane. I so vividly remembered, hearing her say: "Every individual can make

a difference". The words gave me strength at a moment when I felt overwhelmed by the sight of the dead turtle before me. Her voice convinced me that even a single step could matter.

That single step became TREE Foundation, which I formally established in 2002 and the same year also became the Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots, first India member (a Global Network of Volunteers).

The inspiration

Inspired by her ability to connect people with nature, I began with

Jane Goodall during a visit to Chennai; Supraja Dharini is seen next to her. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the same fisherman who first told me about the turtle. His knowledge was invaluable, and from there, we slowly built trust with fisher communities. Just as Dr. Jane had shown the world that science must walk hand in hand with empathy, I realised conservation in India could only succeed by working with people whose lives are tied to the sea.

Dr. Jane's Roots & Shoots movement, which empowers young people to care for the planet, inspired us to make students central to our conservation programmes. Today, children and young adults across Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Goa are part of biodiversity awareness campaigns, beach clean-ups, and ecosystem walks building the next generation of guardians for nature.

Dr. Jane taught us that change is never immediate, but requires patience, compassion, and courage. Her story helped me overcome scepticism in the early days, when some communities questioned why a woman was speaking to fishermen about sea turtles and walking on the beach at night time. Now artisanal fishermen along our project area coast, release entangled endangered marine megafauna including sea turtles caught in their nets or ghost nets and release back to the sea.

The meeting

In 2007, destiny granted me the

chance to meet Dr. Jane in person for the first time. To sit with her, to be encouraged by her kind words, and later to welcome her into our home during her 2009 visit, remain among the most treasured experiences of my life, even though I had the opportunity later to spend time with her multiple times again in the United States of America. She was always delighted to hear about our accomplishments and sent her warm wishes when I was selected by The Explorers Club in 2021 as one of the '50 People Changing the World'.

During her visits to India, at Chennai and Hyderabad, she met fishermen, interacted with the TREE Foundation's Sea Turtle Protection Force members, students, conservation leaders and even officers from the Indian Coast Guard, Forest Department and consuls from various country consulates.

A personal farewell

Though she is no longer with us in body, Dr. Jane's legacy will always live in our work. Her Jane Goodall Institute continues to inspire globally, and here in Tamil Nadu, her light shines in every turtle hatchling released to the sea, every child who learns to care for the ocean, and every community that chooses coexistence.

For me, Dr. Jane was more than an inspiration she was the guiding light of my life. Dr. Jane thank you for showing us the way. We will keep walking the path you lit for us.

(Supraja Dharini is founder-chairperson, TREE Foundation)

Anti-drug programme at Anna Nagar Tower Park

The Madras School of Social Work (MSSW), Egmore, in collaboration with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Chennai Zonal Unit, organised an anti-drug awareness programme at Anna Nagar Tower Park recently.

The programme was an extension of a study conducted by MSSW postgraduate students on drug use among undergraduate students in Chennai. The research revealed key concerns including peer pressure, easy accessibility of drugs, and social stigma, which continues to discourage

students from seeking de-addiction support despite awareness of counselling services, said a release.

As part of the awareness drive, students performed a street play to spread messages about the dangers of substance abuse and the availability of support systems for prevention and rehabilitation. Deepak Kaushik, Superintendent, NCB Chennai Zone; Jubin Sam, Sub-Inspector, NCB Chennai Zone, and Vaibhav Srivastava, Assistant Director, Southern Region, NCB Chennai, were the special guests.

Events to mark wildlife week at Vandalur zoo from October 5

As part of Wildlife Week 2025, the Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP) in Vandalur has lined up a series of events on the theme 'Human Animal Coexistence'. On October 5, a 'Bird and Tree Identification Walk' will take place between 8 and 11 a.m. Those aged 15 and above can participate in it.

On October 7, a national symposium on 'Human-Wildlife Conflict – Challenges and Solutions' for college students will be held (Topic: Voices For Wildlife) between 11.30 a.m. and 1 p.m..

On October 8, drawing and poster-making events will be conducted for school students in three categories.

For students of Classes III to V, the topic is 'Elephants vs Farm Lands' or 'Monkeys vs Urban Areas', VI to VIII, 'Broken Wildlife Corridors' or 'Innovative Solutions to Reduce Conflict', and IX to XII, 'From Conflict to Co-existence' or 'Balance between People and Wildlife'.

Animal keeper talk series, an awareness programme on 'Wildlife and Us, Learning to Co-exist' and a poster-making contest are among the other events.

To participate, register at <https://aazp.in/wildlife-week2025/>

Inter-school oratorical and debate competition

Union Christian Matriculation Higher Secondary School is conducting ORATORIA'25, an inter-school oratorical and debate competition for students of classes IX to XII. The event will be held on October 31 and the winner of the contest will receive a return ticket to Singapore, said a release. Other exciting prizes worth ₹90,000 will be given. Registrations close on October 10. Scan the QR code to register.



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