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RAISING MORE FAMILIES

The Pheasant-tailed jacana which depends on the monsoons and availability of water to breed can now be seen wearing its breeding plumage more frequently, sometimes as early as mid-April and that should not raise eyebrows **P2**



RETired KOLU DOLLS MAKE A COMEBACK

An artist, Renu Sabanayagam does not buy kolu dolls in mint condition, but gets those broken in body and restores their look and purpose **P4&5**

A safety hazard in Pallikaranai



A slanting electricity post at Tambaram Velachery Main Road in Pallikaranai. With rains lashing the city regularly and NE Monsoon not too far from the door, letting this post continue in this manner is not in the interest of public safety.
PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN



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Raising more families

The Pheasant-tailed jacana which depends on the monsoons and availability of water to breed can now be seen wearing its breeding plumage more frequently, sometimes as early as mid-April and that should not raise eyebrows



PRINCE FREDERICK

The LinkedIn profile might be up-to-date, but not the profile picture. The jawline might not be as well-defined in reality as in the display picture. Usually, the difference between reality and representation goes unnoticed unless the person has developed a bald pate overnight. But if one belonged to the Aves class of Kingdom Animalia, the date of the “display picture” would matter, some birds shedding their “look” as often as clouds change their shapes. Some species are known for “makeovers” as dramatically different as those assumed by a Kamal Haasan and in the western film world, a Daniel Day-Lewis.

There is nothing deliberate about it,” says ornithologist V. Santharam, “they are programmed to breed when the ideal conditions are present, their gonadal morphology changing in response to the availability of resources. Birds are opportunistic not by choice, but their biology. And South West Monsoon being more fruitful in terms of rains in Chennai, many waterbirds must be making the most of that situation.”



Pheasant-tailed jacanas in breeding plumage this year by September-end, July-end and even mid-April (where one bird is in full breeding plumage and the other in partial breeding plumage). The images are from water-filled patches in Perumbakkam and Semmancherry. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



The frequency of makeovers depends on a bird species’ breeding cycles. Waterbirds and birds that synchronise their breeding cycles with rains could wear their breeding plumage more often if the showers get oftener.

“There is nothing deliberate about it,” says ornithologist V. Santharam, “they are programmed to breed when the ideal conditions are present, their gonadal morphology changing in response to the availability of resources. Birds are opportunistic not by choice, but their biology. And South West Monsoon being more fruitful in terms of rains in Chennai, many waterbirds must be making the most of that situation.”

Conversely, when the ideal conditions are absent at a time they are expected, that would be mirrored by gonadal morphology, it being underdeveloped. Birds could skip a breeding cycle on account of an unhelpful environment.

In Chennai, waterbirds and birds whose breeding cycles depend on rains are likely to be making more “babies” now, as in recent years, the South West monsoon has been more productive than before.

Even outside of the monsoons, there have been showers – one noticed it in April (when a thunderstorm happened) and May this year in Chennai. On account of frequent showers, waterbirds would be raising more clutches. One can get a sense of that from certain species that put on dramatically different plumage when they are breeding, by how often they are togged up in these feathers.

The Pheasant-tailed jacana can particularly be seen slipping into breeding plumage more frequently.

ENVIRONMENT

A move to deal with wet waste

Two 50-tonne windrow composting centres would be coming up at Greater Chennai Corporation's Perungudi dumpyard



R. AISHWARYAA

To address the critical gaps in wet waste processing across Zones IX to XV, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is setting up two 50-tonne windrow composting units at the Perungudi dumpyard.

According to GCC's Solid Waste Management Department, the facilities are designed to reduce landfill pressure and ensure daily collection loads are treated closer to source.

An official said, "Chennai generates an average of 6,150 tonnes of municipal solid waste each day, including 3,200 tonnes of wet waste. While part of this is diverted to decentralised composting centres, a significant share remains unprocessed, particularly during monsoon periods. The new windrow units are expected to add immediate capacity in the city's south region."

"The new windrow facilities will

use reinforced concrete platforms and galvanised iron roofing. Waste will be laid in rows and turned mechanically at scheduled intervals to allow controlled aerobic decomposition. The end product is compost. Windrow composting lowers processing costs and creates marketable by-products such as manure," the official added.

Through a tender process recently, one facility was awarded to a private firm at ₹5.41 crore, and the second at ₹5.56 crore. "Both contracts were finalised following technical and financial evaluation. Construction within the Perungudi dumpyard, will begin after preparatory works are completed on-site," GCC stated.

In April, during a GCC windrow plant visit in Manali, activist Mohammed Harris noted, "We find plastic and rubber items, such as milk packets and diapers, in these piles. For windrow composting to work effectively, these non-degradable items need to be removed."

To this, a GCC official said, "Source segregation of waste will improve operations at the windrow plant by ensuring that only organic waste is processed, enhancing compost quality."

File photo

Cleanliness drive at Kovalam beach



The Department of Plant Biology and Plant Biotechnology, the Environ Club and the Department of Environmental Studies in collaboration with EFI's International Coastal

Clean-Up, organised a "Beach Swachhata Drive" at Kovalam on September 20, 2025.

The initiative was aimed at creating awareness on marine ecosystem protection and to curb plastic pollution along coastal areas,

says a press release. Thirty-one students participated with enthusiasm, assembling at the venue by 7 a.m. and contributing actively to the clean-up efforts.

The event showcased effective collaboration between academic institutions, NGOs and students, underlining the importance of collective action in ensuring a cleaner and safer environment for humans and marine life, the release adds

Bonsai expo

Bodhi, the Chennai Bonsai Association, is hosting its annual 'Bonsai' exhibition from September 30 to October 2 at Lalit Kala Akademi (from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. each of these days). At the expo, visitors can experience the tranquillity and beauty of Japanese Bonsai for peace of mind. Bonsai beginner classes will be held on the occasion, says a press release. The association aims to promote the art of Bonsai and share its philosophy of patience, balance, and harmony, the release adds.

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Retired kolu dolls make a comeback



An artist, Renu Sabanayagam does not buy kolu dolls in mint condition, but gets those broken in body and restores their look and purpose

PRINCE FREDERICK

Renu Sabanayagam calls erstwhile kolu dolls out of retirement, rehabilitates them and puts them back on the Navarathri beat.

Each doll in her kolu collection now can share an account of how wholesomeness was restored to it. When Renu picked them up, these dolls were lying in dingy cubbyholes and dusty antique stores, broken in body. Missing body parts had to be reconstructed and glued on to their frames, which were usually hugely lacklustre, requiring deft dabs of an enamel paint-carrying brush. Renu has made them whole again in an ongoing do-it-yourself project (est. 2018). In her own words, this project (entirely a hobby to her) has so far notched up a tally somewhere between 200 and 300 dolls, each of them restored variously.

The artist in Renu encourages her to seek those dolls that need to check into a workstation before ascending the kolu stage. Quoting Renu: "I am able to do this work only because I know how to draw and paint." Though "Renu the artist" is germane to the topic, let us save that for the last.

The Kolu display stands out for its diversity, the dolls differing noticeably in stature and dimension.

Renu, a resident of Kesavaperumalpuram in R.A. Puram, explains: "Nothing I got, I got as a set. That is why the dolls are in disparate sizes. I think in those days they used to make the Ramayana set and all that. But nothing has been handed down to me from those days. This is not from my in-



Sections of Renu Sabanayagam's kolu; some of the dolls she has restored; her artwork based on Gond tribal art; and a pair of white shoes she embellished with painting for her granddaughter. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

laws, this is not from my parents. This is what I have collected myself in antique shops. So, sometimes you get big dolls, sometimes small dolls."

A walkaround

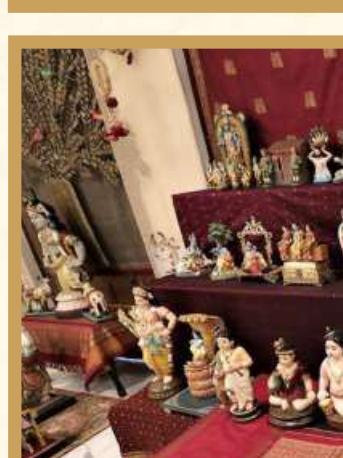
In traditional kolu displays, the dolls sit squat on stands with multiple steps (*kolu padi*), resembling school students in a bleachers-style seating arrangement, every strand of hair slicked into place for



a group photograph. This tiered arrangement works best when the author of the display is faced with restrictive spatial bandwidth. Renu need not skimp on space, but that is only half the reason for dispensing with the traditional display format. The other half, the more compelling one, is that her kolu tableaux accommodates multiple themes, and demands (and warrants) a walkaround. The result: a "banquet" dis-

tinguished by "themed counters", each representing a purana.

How she put together a collection with its various themes provides a microcosmic view of the human situation, giving a peek into the weighty philosophical question of determinism versus free will. Renu's collection seems to prove one has agency to craft their personal stories up to a point, and beyond that, those stories develop a mind of their own and unapologetically rewrite themselves, striking out entire paragraphs with the red-end of a two-coloured editor's pencil. Putting it



Art challenge driven by AI celebrates Durga Puja

SMCA Charitable Trust in association with HashHackCode is conducting the competition on October 1 for children



dirt. Brittle, they can give way under slightly sustained pressure. One can be certain she was breathing easy while working on a handful of wooden dolls, also on display at the kolu.

Renu has been collecting and restoring kolu dolls since 2018, adopting the hobby to fill a void created by an empty nest, the children leaving home in pursuit of their own destinies. Renu notes in all these years only around a couple of dolls came painted in natural pigment colours; the rest arrived with enamel paint in various stages of flaking. In many cases, she has had to recreate entire features with the paint brush, and restore the doll's essential patina. Renu the artist is intrinsic to this collection. She observes that when she saw two dolls, both based on Ravi Varma's paintings, she knew the creative source.

The artist

Renu calls herself "a largely self-taught artist" and "an amateur artist" (which comes across as a modest self-assessment when one gets acquainted with her work) who "works with different art forms". One senses a particular liking for Gond tribal art. She does not always work with paper and canvas, occasionally with white shoes too – "shoes" here is not an auto-correct error.

Her husband Rajendran Sabanayagam (who was with McKinsey & Company in New York and on return to India founded Sumangala Steel) explains: "Her artistic abilities were developed under the informal tutelage of my mother, Savithri Sabanayagam, and while travelling with me both in India and abroad. The artworks are of professional quality, everyone who sees them says that, but she does not want to leave her comfort zone and keeps her art within the family."

Which means giving her artworks to relatives, and also adding artistic value to white shoes bought for children in the family (she has three grandchildren) as well as those in the extended family.

Says Rajendran: "She gets shoes, white shoes. And she paints on the white shoes for all the children. I have given her one of my white shoes and I have asked her to paint it for me."

That would likely be the immediate project following this kolu season – Rajendran hopes it is.

South Madras Cultural Association (SMCA) Charitable Trust, in collaboration with HashHackCode (HHC), is introducing a first-of-its-kind event to this year's Durga Puja celebrations: the Generative AI (GenAI) Kids Competition.

Scheduled to be held on October 1, the competition invites children to create AI-generated images inspired by the vibrant spirit of Durga Puja, says a press release.

This programme blends tradition with technology, giving children a unique opportunity to explore generative AI while celebrating their cultural heritage. Participants will transform their written prompts into stunning digital artwork, sparking creativity, building digital confidence, and developing future-ready skills. It shows how festivals can become platforms for creativity and learning, the release says.

Families attending Navami festivities will witness how a community celebration can evolve into an inspiring space

for technological exploration—offering children a glimpse of the future while honouring cherished traditions.

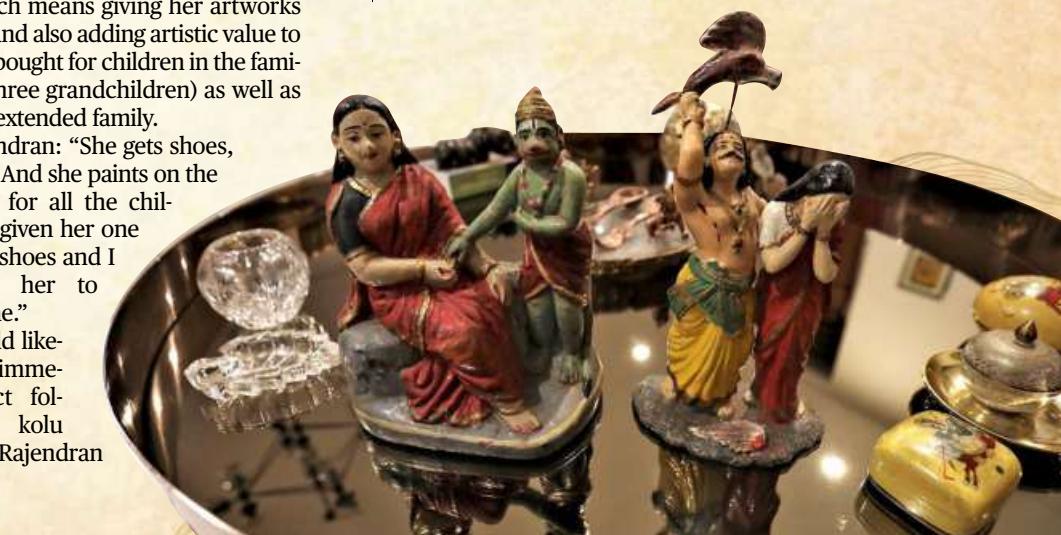
SMCA Charitable Trust is a community organisation in Chennai dedicated to promoting art, culture and social welfare. Through year-round activities including music, dance, educational initiatives and charitable outreach – SMCA fosters community engagement and preserves cultural heritage while embracing modern, inclusive ideas.

The event

When: October 1
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Venue: Mantra Gardens, Nandanam Extension, Chennai – 600035

Who can join:
Children aged 8–16; no prior experience required

Registration link:
<http://bit.ly/HHCSMCA>
Contact: 9176894576 | 9886693027



A safe shot

Animal welfare groups have intensified efforts to vaccinate dogs, both strays and pets, against rabies across Chennai. Residents can promote the drive and also benefit from it

LIFFY THOMAS

When was the last time you took your dog to the vet? Pets require an annual checkup. The vaccination schedule cannot be compromised.

September 28 is World Rabies Day and the theme this year, for the first time in 19 years, does not include the word "rabies", says the World Health Organisation. The theme this time - "Act now: you, me, communities". It calls on everyone to be more responsible, work together with others and drive real change.

With recent disturbing instances of rabies-related death and Supreme Court's latest order on street dogs, animal welfare organisations have intensified vaccination across Chennai.

Staff and volunteers of Blue Cross of India will be revisiting Kannagi Nagar on September 28 to

**WORLD RABIES DAY:
SEPTEMBER 28**



From a recent vaccination drive conducted by Blue Cross of India

conduct a camp for strays. They had vaccinated the strays there against rabies last year. The NGO has been focusing on localities outside Greater Chennai Corporation limits, Avadi being a key focus this year (a two-day camp was conducted on September 20 and 21).

The team from People for Cattle in India (PFCI) have set a target of administering 100 vaccines on World Rabies Day – 60 dogs and 40 cats drawn from neighbour-

GCC's pet clinics

Greater Chennai Corporations run six pet clinics in the city at Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar, Nungambakkam, Meenambakkam, Pulianthope, Llyods Road and Kannamapet. Visit <https://chennai.corporation.gov.in/gcc/veterinary/contact/petclinic/> for exact location and contact numbers.

hoods in Ambatur and Avadi.

HeavenForAnimal is planning a massive drive in October that will

be launched at a school in Chetpet before a mobile vehicle heads to different locations.

VinodKumaar Sankara Panicker, general manager, Blue Cross of India, says for strays to get real immunity, vaccination drives must be done once a year. "Last year, we vaccinated 5,000 dogs and this year we plan to increase the count to 8,500 dogs, thanks to HCL Foundation that is supporting us in a big way," says Vinod.

Besides dedicated locations where owners can come with their pets, Blue Cross team fans out to various neighbourhoods to vaccinate strays.

Unlike sterilisation where the dogs are notched on their ears, in vaccination dogs are marked with a vegetable dye that helps them being identified as vaccinated.

The economics of it and poor awareness are reasons why people in the outskirts are ignorant about vaccination. Vaccination protects animals from the deadly disease, and by extension, humans. Vaccinated pets further prevent the spread of rabies in humans.

Dr Arun Pari, a veterinary consultant, says if one is bitten by a stray dog, they must go and take a rabies vaccine as well as a multi-antigen shot. Getting the first dose of the rabies vaccine as soon as possible after rabies exposure is advised. "The first rabies shot should be done within 24 hours of being bitten; this is something people ignore," says Dr Arun.

Animal welfare groups say cost of vaccine and manpower are among challenges they face in vaccinating as many strays as possible.

"If you have community dogs in your street, the best gift to give them is ensuring they are vaccinated either at free camps happening in the city or pool in money and take them to the hospital," says Vinod.

LIFFY THOMAS

Project management consultants in the city are increasingly stepping into a new role – mediator in redevelopment projects. Their mandate involves getting buy-ins from all owners, liaising with a developer that has the best deal to offer, clarifying nagging doubts about the legal and technical feasibility of such projects and carrying out paper work.

Ever since Tamil Nadu Apartment Owners Rules, 2024 came into effect, many apartment complexes that are more than 30 years old are keen on taking the redevelopment route. But a lack of familiarity with the nitty-gritty of the process holds them back.

One of the biggest challenges is ensuring all owners in an apartment are on board. Some would have per-

Smoothing out the jagged edges of redevelopment

Apartment associations seeking to restructure their facilities increasingly seek consultants who serve as a bridge between owners and promoters

sonal reasons (which they might want to keep personal, making things worse) for not joining a redevelopment project. Some would be handicapped by the fact that they do not live in the community; and they would not want to spare time for the various rounds of discussion.

"Each owner would have unique challenges and it is up to us to work with them and on those challenges," says Sivaram V. of Vaidyanath Estates. "One of my clients wanted us to persuade a senior resident staying on the ground floor to agree for a joint development of the apartment with no lift. Some owners did

not want to move out of the locality during the redevelopment period."

Sivaram says it is the residents association or owners that sign them on to tackle these issues.

Choosing a developer with a reputation for meeting project deadlines, one who can offer additional benefits, negotiating the price with the builder and the rental compensation are among things they mediate over. Ramesh Kumar's research shows that there are 50-70 micro markets where redevelopment is happening in Chennai. "More than 50,000 buildings, which range from two grounds to

two acres, are waiting in Chennai for redevelopment. Owners come with clippings of news items but lack clarity, and many are not staying in the flat they invested in, and so we provide them with guidance through the processes ranging from the CMDA approval process to the legal compliance list," says Ramesh of Aspire Project Management Services. He says getting information from the owners is another big task. "UDS (undivided share of land) distribution was not uniform as per the saleable area when these owners bought the property several years ago. Many do not like to share their

UDS details and some want more area," says Ramesh, adding that he charges ₹ 5,000 for preparing the report that talks about feasibility and provides other details.

Discrepancy because of UDS makes it difficult to bring all owners to the discussion table.

Some professionals such as Sivaram do not take a fee from small communities; instead, the developer gives them a percentage once the deal is made. Vikram Chandramani, director, Rams Builders, says they do work with such consultants as long as the owners are fine with it. "We have only come across individuals who are doing this, but as the market opens up this would become a professional service," says Vikram.

Cops gift helmets, first-aid kits to students



D. Kumar, Greater Chennai Deputy Commissioner of Police Traffic - South; C. Koodiselvan, ADC Adyar; along with Guindy and Adyar Traffic Inspectors, distributed helmets, first-aid kits and stickers to students as part of Road Safety Traffic awareness programme at Chellammal Women's College in Guindy on September 26.

PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN

Road in Perumbakkam waits for mending



Potholes at Mettu Street in Perumbakkam lead to water stagnation.
PHOTOS: R. RAVINDRAN.

Convocation held at D.B. Jain College

D.B Jain College at Thoraipakkam celebrated its 50th year Convocation Ceremony.

The function was inaugurated by Harish Mehta, secretary (Administration) and chairman, governing body, who also formally declared the ceremony closed.

The chief guest, Hans Raj Verma, retired IAS and chairman, ITCOT, graced the occasion and addressed the graduates.

A total of 445 students received their degrees, including Ph.D., M.Phil., and undergraduate students.

In his welcome address, Sakthivel Mu-rugan, professor in-charge, greeted the gathering, while principal C. Sundar presented the convocation report of the college.

The college noted that most of the graduates have been successfully placed through the efforts of its placement cell.

YMIA observes Annie Besant's 92nd death anniversary at TS

Young Men's Indian Association (YMIA), founded by Dr. Annie Besant in 1914, remembered its founder on her 92nd death anniversary day through an event at "Garden Of Remembrance" in Theosophical Society, Adyar.

According to a press release, R. Ramachandran, president, P.G.Sadgurudas, vice-

president, A.Sekar, honorary secretary, Shobana Ramesh, honorary joint secretary and members of the governing body, R.Nataraj, N.Madhanchandar, life members, administrative officer, gym members along with Jai Kumar, general manager, Theosophical Society, participated in the event, laying a wreath and paying their respects.



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CMRL opens Lost and Found office

Lost something during your trip on the metro rail? No need to panic. The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has facilitated a Lost and Found office at the Chennai Central Metro Station. Commuters can approach a single dedicated facility to retrieve their lost belongings during travel.

For queries regarding lost and

found items, commuters may email: LFO@cmrl.in; the website is <https://chennaimetrorail.org/lost-and-found-enquiry>, says a press release from the CMRL. CMRL will not be responsible for any lost items. However, belongings lost during travel can be retrieved at the respective station or the centralised Lost and Found Office, the release adds.



Prince Group honours professors with awards

The Prince Group of Institutions recently hosted the 'Prince Perasiyar Virudhu' ceremony to recognise professors for their contributions to research and education innovations.

The ceremony took place at Prince Shri Venkateshwaran Padmavathy Engineering College in Ponmar.

V. Narayanan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), presented awards and certificates to the professors.

Narayanan emphasised the vital role of teachers in shaping a nation. He said that the discipline and values taught by teachers, along with education help build a strong and ethical society.



Professors from various institutions were honoured. They include: N. Pappa from Anna University, Pandiarajan from Agni College, R. Narayananmoorthi from SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Hater Lenin A from Saveetha Engineering College, A. R. Aravind from Prince

Shri Venkateshwaran Padmavathy Engineering College, P. Rameshkumar from PSN Engineering College, Dr. S. Baskar from Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, and V. J. Kishor Sonti from Sathyabama Institute of Science & Technology.

Annual chess tournament has a new addition

In its 25th year, Jaigopal Garodia Memorial Chess Academy has included a contest exclusively for para chess aspirants

Jaigopal Garodia Memorial Chess Academy is hosting its 25th State-Level Chess Tournament for both boys and girls under five categories on October 12, 2025 at Smt. Durgadevi Choudhary Vivekananda Vidyalaya Senior Secondary School in Kolathur.

As part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations, a tournament exclusively for para chess aspirants will be held on October 11, 2025.

Jaigopal Garodia Memorial Chess Academy was started to popularise chess, to train and nurture the talent and to expose young champions to state and national-level tournaments. Ever since its inception, young talented aspirants have been given coaching by expert coaches on the school premises. The chess academy was initiated by Jaigopal Garodia, founder and chairman, JGV Trust, an educationist, a philanthropist and a visionary who has been doing yeoman service in imparting education and serving the community through various organisations, says a press release.

An inclusive extension of the tournament persons with disabilities including those with vision impairment, speech and hearing challenges are invited to take part in it. Competitions will be held from U-7 to U-17. The last date to register is October 9. Attractive cash prizes will be given to the winners, added the release.

Interested participants must register at easypay-chess.com / chessfee.com / paychessentry.com



'Durgotsav' begins today

The South Madras Cultural Association (SMCA) and SMCA Charitable Trust are presenting a rural Bengal-themed 'Durgotsav' this year.

Titled 'Sharodotsav', the 47th year celebration will take place from September 28 to October 2 at Mantra Garden, First Main Road, Nandanam.

There are exciting competitions, cultural programs, Bhog (food offerings to the deity), and carnival immersion.

For details, contact 9940524459

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Music event at temple in Kottur

A Carnatic musical concert will be held on October 4 at Alarmelmaanga Nayika Sametha Prasanna Venkatesa Perumal Temple (HRCE) at Perumal Koil Street in Kottur. According to a press release, various cultural events will be held at the temple as part of Navarathri festival.

Cancer screening camp on October 4

A camp to screen prostate cancer will be held on October 4 at Curi hospital on Old Mahabalipuram Road. Time: From 6.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. According to a press release, the camp is held to spread awareness about prostate health. For details, call 9043727901.

Quiz for school students

As part of its education awareness initiative, Dr. Kamakshi Memorial Hospitals has launched a quiz programme, "Heart Wise" for students in classes V to IX.

Organised as part of World Heart Day 2025 (September 29), the event is aimed to inspire students to take an interest in their health and understand the importance of heart care.

The quiz will cover topics such as the basics of the human heart, nutrition, exercise, lifestyle choices, and preventive healthcare.

On October 6, the preliminary round will be held online. The shortlisted students will compete in the semi-finals and finale, scheduled to take place on October 12 at the hospital auditorium in Pallikaranai at 2 p.m.

Students can register at <https://bit.ly/heartwisequiz25>, and schools can call 98840 89340.

For further details, email your queries to quiztime@zigmaads.com

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