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Wingwalls coming up at Adyar creek



Construction of wingwalls on the eastern and western side. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The culvert Greater Chennai Corporation being constructed under DGS Dinakaran Salai to facilitate easy tidal movement of water in the Adyar creek is complete in its core aspects.

Currently, work relating to secondary objectives is being carried out. Evidence of this is the construction buffer zones on the eastern and western sides. In engineering terms, these are wingwalls. According to a GCC official familiar with the developments, Chennai Rivers Restora-

tion Trust had sought this feature. Besides giving the culverts a finished look, it also ensures safety, which has assumed a new dimension with the linking of Phase I and Phase II of Tholkappia Poonga. On the wingwalls, grilles are being raised for added protection.

On the eastern side of the culvert, the landing of the skywalk extends to this buffer zone.

This wingwalls with their protective grilles can probably also serve a space to pause and take in Adyar creek, particularly its avifauna.



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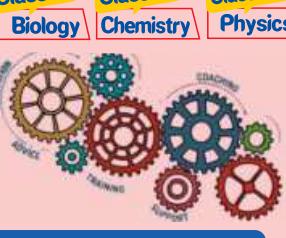
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Hyperlocal History, as written by residents

Three years shy of three decades: that is a long time. Over this period, *The Hindu Downtown* has been at its post, relaying residents' civic concerns to the powers that can address them. On this anniversary, besides renewing this commitment, the supplement refreshes the various initiatives it has launched. One of them is to spotlight climate change in a manner that is accessible to residents: what they can do in their corner of their world to combat it.

Besides, in the new year, *The Hindu Downtown* will be rolling out what it calls "Hyperlocal History". It is history as written by residents, not just residents of neighbourhoods with known heritage value, but also obscure ones whose stories are waiting to be told. In the first edition of 2026, the focus of this project, and how residents can contribute to it will be made known. So, be tuned in.





At the launch.

Biogas plant at GCC school in Thiruvanmiyur

In a significant stride toward advancing sustainable and renewable energy practices, The Rotary Club of Madras (RI Dist. 3234) and The Thoon Trust, in association with the Residents of Kasturibangar Association (ROKA) has inaugurated a state-of-the-art bio-methanation plant at the Chennai Primary School in Thiruvanmiyur.

The initiative marks a meaningful contribution to community-led environmental stewardship, transforming organic waste into clean energy while fostering awareness among young stu-

dents about sustainable living, says a press release.

The dedication ceremony was attended by distinguished members and contributors who have been instrumental in driving community welfare projects. Notable attendees included Rtn. Nikhil Raj, President, Rotary Club of Madras; Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopal, Honorary Secretary, RCM; Rtn. Suresh Amirapu, Director of Community Services Development, RCM; and Rtn. B. V. Gautam, Chairperson, Environment Action Committee, RCM.

Also present were Janani Ven-

kitesh, Secretary, ROKA; Rtn. Sid Hande, Vice Chairperson, Environment Action Committee; Rtn. Sabina Narayan; and Stella Rosalin, Headmistress of Chennai Primary School, whose support has been vital to implementing the project on campus.

The event highlighted the spirit of collaboration that made this environmental milestone possible, particularly recognising Rtn. Kadresan and Vasughi, who lead The Thoon Trust and have been central to bringing this green initiative to fruition. the release adds.

Safety check on the tracks



▼
Workers engaged in track maintenance on the section involving the Velachery - St Thomas Mount expansion of MRTS line, on December 18.
PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

'Chennai needs trifurcation, not just expansion'

HARSHA KODA

The proposal to expand the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) to 300 wards is a welcome move. For the rapidly expanding suburbs, especially the cosmopolitan IT corridor of OMR, this change is long overdue.

The stagnation under village panchayats has been palpable. Every time residents ask why solid waste management is collapsing, why garbage dumps are choking our lakes, or why unsorted trash "mysteriously" catches fire, we get the same tired excuse: "We are a poor panchayat; we have no funds." Bringing these areas under the Corporation umbrella finally unlocks the budget required to fix these issues.

Yes, property taxes will rise. But most of us are willing to pay that premium if it guarantees paved roads, drainage, and professional

civic amenities.

But let us be realistic. Being part of the GCC is not a silver bullet. Large parts of OMR came under GCC limits 15 years ago, yet many of us are still waiting for piped water and underground sewage. Expansion is a step forward, but it does not guarantee efficiency.

The problem with size: large bodies bring large problems.

A single corporation managing 300 wards risks becoming a bureaucratic behemoth. Instead of creating one giant entity, we should look at Trifurcation.

The precedent: the Chennai Police successfully bifurcated into Chennai and Tambaram Commissioners to improve law and order. The solution, we believe is to split the civic body into North, Central, and South Chennai Corporations. This makes the city manageable and the administration accountable.



Photo used for representational purpose.

Shree Anandhaas in Palavakkam

CHITRA DEEPA ANANTHARAM

Shree Anandhaas, the 25-year-old family-owned brand from Coimbatore, has launched its sixth branch in the city at Palavakkam on ECR. Starting as a restaurant in 1998, the brand ventured into sweets and snacks, opening its first dedicated outlet in 2017 within one of its Coimbatore restaurants.

Shree Anandhaas focuses on providing an in-store experience and offering unique sweets and savouries is a part of that. At the launch, the display of sweets and savouries caught everyone's attention. A highlight of the outlet is the sampling desk, where visitors can try new launches along with their signature eleneer (tender coconut) halwa, made from tender coconuts sourced from Pollachi and prepared with Siruvani river water.



The mysurpa craze continues with new launches including cucumber mysurpa, ABC mysurpa, Nattu paneerrose mysurpa, and Asoka mysurpa, made using ash gourd, in addition to earlier favourites like carrot, red banana and blackcurrant mysurpa.

Visitors are also drawn to the Kovilpatti special counter, which offers regional treats such as thaen mittai, inji mittai, eelu urundai, nilakadalai urundai, pottu kalada urundai, and kalkona. Savouries options include Vaz-

hathandu murukku, enriched with banana stem juice, garlic mixture, and over 80 other varieties. The chaat counter functions from 11 am to 10 pm. The Shree Anandhaas is planning new outlets in Nungambakkam and Anna Nagar as part of its ongoing expansion.

The Palavakkam store is located at 4/193, ECR, and is open from 8 am to 10 pm. Orders can also be placed online across India and worldwide at www.anandhaas-sweets.com.

Another rarity at Broken Bridge

Rare seabird shows up on Chennai coast. A Bangalore resident documents it



Red-billed tropicbird photographed by Anu Parthasarathy at Broken Bridge in Adyar Estuary on December 14; and (below) Anu with a few members of the birding community she is part of.

PRINCE FREDERICK

Birders could put in an absurd number of hours at a habitat, one next to their own "burrow". Every dawn, they could be sleepwalking to the patch, trussed up in camouflage rags, bent under the weight of expectations and gear, shutter sack on the shoulders and binoculars around the neck. And yet, that one rarity could defiantly stay out of their radar. Counter to this, someone strolls in from another city, strays on to the patch, as all other options for the day got crossed out. And lo and behold, there it is! The bird directs a red-billed smile at them.

Anu Parthasarathy probably would have preferred sighting a Red-billed tropicbird after waiting for it for years, to the way she actually sighted it – just like that. A Banglorean who manages once-a-month visits to Chennai to bond with close relatives, she decided to bird around the Broken Bridge area of the Adyar Estuary on December 14, as all other plans for the day had peeled off like paint flakes. How one big plan fell, in her own words – "I ended up at the Broken Bridge because I could not get online tickets to the renovated Tholkappia

Poonga."

A birder through-and-through, Anu's mind instantly associates leisure with bird walks. Social visits to Chennai are always a package tour with time for extemporaneous birding trips thrown into it. But prior to this visit, she had ambled down what is unofficially called the Broken Bridge Road only a couple of times. Her parents living in Velachery, a peek at the Pallikaranai marsh and Sholinganallur marshland is more common.

"This Sunday was pure joy and thrill – I was almost wrapping up around 8 a.m. after birding from 6:30 a.m. photographing the egrets and storks. I met Bharath there. He along with Sagarika excitedly pointed me to what initially looked like Caspian terns to me, till I noticed the long tails. They told me they were sure they were tropicbirds and asked me to click and document," Anu recalls. Those two birders are Bharath Ravikumar and Sagarika Gupta, names recognisable to those swinging by the Chennai section of eBird.

"The tropicbirds were a sight – beautiful with long streamer tails. They came around a few times closer and were circling. I did not see them land anywhere. There were four birds – all of them as far as I could tell were Red-billed trop-



icbirds. After about 10 to 15 minutes I did not sight them again and I had to leave by 8:30 a.m. There were some other birders too that might have sighted these birds again," Anu recounts. She has posted the record of the sighting with photos on eBird. Sagarika Gupta has also posted the sighting on the platform. Rummaging through eBird records, this could be the first documented sighting of red-billed tropicbirds in Chennai.

Anu used to live in Chennai in the 1990s. In Bangalore where she has been living for 15 years following her return to India from the United States, she is domiciled in a community called Eagle Ridge, near Bannerghatta. She is something of a change maker in her neck of the woods.

"It is a small green and wooded community. I work on trying my best to conserve the trees and habitats we have, but it has not been easy with the new residents cutting out a lot of the trees and undergrowth. It has been documenting birds in the community for almost 10 years now. I created a small safe garden area for migratory and residents birds to access water by placing a bunch of water bowls. I have been maintaining this for many years now and many bird enthusiasts visit to sight the birds as well. A few other residents also have been doing this and helping sustain the bird life. We have a small group of birders here now. We have recorded over 125 species in the community over the years."

So, Anu is not Fortune's favourite child, as one assumed at first, seeing her being gifted a rare sighting on a golden platter. She worked for it, showing up for trees, birds and Nature in her "gated habitat" back in Bangalore, and the award ceremony for this perseverance took place at the Broken Bridge in Chennai on December 14.

Another sighting on December 20

On December 20, when this edition was going to print, another sighting of a Red-billed tropicbird close to the Broken Bridge area of the Adyar Estuary was reported. Sundaravel Palanivel spotted the bird in the skies just as he had hit the path to the Broken Bridge area. The bird was hovering over the fishing hamlet, says Sundaravel. He was going to bird at Adyar Estuary with a bunch of the other birders, who had arrived at the spot before he did. "I was ten minutes late, and so, was behind them." And that made all the difference. Punctuality is overrated, going by Sundaravel's experience.



(Clockwise from top left) Garbage bin at First Main Road in Vimala Nagar on December 9; garbage dumping spots at Neela Nagar Extension Third Street, Vimala Nagar Third Cross Street and Babu Nagar Third Main Road on December 20. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK



A tour of *mini garbage* dumps in Medavakkam

PRINCE FREDERICK

A garbage bin stationed at First Main Road in Vimala Nagar has the unmistakable attraction of a celluloid superstar's vanity van. Those hopefully milling around the van would obviously outnumber those authorised and allowed to step inside. Garbage accumulates thick and fast around this bin. An unrelenting procession of people fling their garbage in the precincts around it, having been denied space in the bin – just how much can one lone bin take.

There are "heraldic displays" on the bin – the name of the locality (Vimala Nagar) and the local civic body (Medavakkam panchayat).

The bin looks intact, but is likely to get worn to the fingertips if no efforts are taken to reduce its current

workload. Vimala Nagar Third Cross Street has a garbage bin gnawed down to the bones, left with a gaping hole it cannot hide any more. The stench of decaying waste, dumped around it and beyond, day after day, hangs heavy in the air. In a vacant plot in neighbouring Neela Nagar Extension Third Street, a similarly weathered, broken bin lies toppled over. Put out to grass, it witnesses huge amounts of garbage being dumped around it.

There are any number of examples to describe how garbage is not allowed to depart gracefully from the streets of Vimala Nagar, Babu Nagar and Neela Nagar in Medavakkam. Instead of lining up example after example, it would be judicious to zoom out and take in the whole picture.

According to residents, bins

have either been removed or unusable. Conservancy workers from the Panchayat do knock on the door to collect garbage. But simultaneously, garbage makes it to the street, residents dumping in patches where bins once stood. In Babu Nagar, a bin on First Main Road is gone, but the dumping has not. Babu Nagar Third Main Road has its own "dedicated" inglorious dumping spot. Dumping is rampant along one side of Babu Nagar First Cross Street; even after conservancy workers from the panchayat clear the waste, foul-smelling leachate hangs around.

Efforts to go bin-less mark the right course, but not until other cylinders in the system are firing right. Resources at hand to carry out door-to-door collection need to be counted; residents have to be educated about composting, and

what to do with recyclables and so on. Without these factors, garbage will end up on the streets, bins or no bins. The garbage bin on Vimala Nagar First Main Road is a rarity, surprisingly presentable, probably because it has not seen many winters. It has stepped into the breach left by an old, battered bin. The bin's wholesomeness seems to, ironically, add to the problem. Residents with qualms about dumping garbage on the streets, head to this patch to offload the waste in this bin. It seems to be force-fed garbage from neighbouring streets. This road connects to Velachery Main Road and witnesses an unending parade of "wayfarers", peo-

ple who are not domiciled in Vimala Nagar. For their part, they bring "gifts" for this bin. Seeing it filled to the brim, they end up discarding their garbage around it, creating another mini dumping ground.

The administrative future of Medavakkam is still in the air, at first the panchayat was expected to be merged with Tambaram City Municipal Corporation and now, Greater Chennai Corporation is in the picture. Until the time Medavakkam gets the tight embrace of a Corporation and is swept into its fold, existing waste management systems have to be tweaked, and attention paid to how garbage leaves its streets.



EVENTS

MTC to issue tokens from December 21

Metropolitan Transport Corporation - Chennai will start issuing tokens from December 21 for senior citizens for travel on its fleet of buses. The half-yearly tokens will be valid for the January-June period (till June 30). Elderly citizens can travel on the bus 10 times a month and they receive around 60 tokens for the period. The tokens will be issued from 8 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. until January 31 at more than 40 bus depots, halting points and terminuses across the city.

In addition to renewing, beneficiaries can also apply for

new identity cards and first-time applicants can get new cards. The tokens will be issued at T. Nagar, Saidapet, Central Railway Station, Broadway, Guindy Estate, Iyyappathangal, Vadapalani, K. K. Nagar, Adambakkam, Velachery, Anna Nagar, Koyambedu, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Ambattur Old Terminus, Avadi, Ayanavaram, Integral Coach Factory, Tondiarpet -1, Toll Gate, Ennore, Vyasarpadi, MKB Nagar, Madhavaram, Padiyallur, Red Hills, Perambur railway station, Vallalar Nagar,

Maths talent exam on February 8

Tamil Nadu Science & Technology Centre is conducting a talent examination in mathematics on February 8, 2026 at Periyar Science & Technology Centre. Time: At 11 a.m. It is a 90-minute test.

Students from class five to eight can take part. The nature of the test is pattern recognition in numbers, says a press release.

Those interested, need to register on or before January 27, 2026. For details, call 044 - 2441 0025.

Tamil theatre festival from December 25

Bhavan's Margazhi Mahotsav is conducting a nine-day Tamil Theatre Festival at the TAG Auditorium, Kilpauk.

Featuring performances by leading theatre groups and eminent playwrights of the city, the festival seeks to present discerning

audiences with high-quality Tamil dramas of artistic merit. Entry to all performances is free. Canteen facilities will be available at the venue.

Athithi, Ardhanaari, Kaanal Neero, Payanam and Kapidhwaja, all by Drummies Drama, will

be staged on December 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 respectively. Other plays that will be staged from December 30 to January 2 are Surukku Pai, Leela Vinodham, Kalavu Neekiya Padalam and LKG Aasai.

All plays begin at 7 p.m.

Students of school in Padur run entrepreneurship programme



Shraddha Children's Academy in Padur conducted its signature student entrepreneurship programme, Young Entrepreneurs of Shraddha (YES), on December 13.

A press release says YES is designed as a hands-on learning platform where students plan, manage and run real business ventures. The event featured student-operated game stalls, food counters offering a variety of dishes, and an Art Mela showcasing creative products, the release adds.

The initiative aims to provide students

with practical exposure to leadership, teamwork, communication and basic financial management, taking learning beyond the classroom.

Speaking about the event, Rebecca Mary Clement, principal, Shraddha Children's Academy, said, "When we see children confidently running stalls, explaining their ideas, and interacting with people, we know the learning has truly happened. It is heartening to see them apply real-life skills while contributing meaningfully to society."

Book donation

N.S. Venkataraman, a resident of Besant Nagar, has got 90 books for donation. According to a press release, the genre includes history, religion, economics, and politics. Individuals and institutions are welcome. Those interested, may call 044 - 47662241 / 044 - 43540719.

N.S. Venkataraman is the trustee of Nandini Voice for The Deprived

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An opportunity to be a zoo ambassador



Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur is hosting a winter camp in three batches for school students. 'Vandalur Zoo's Ambassador Winter Camp - 2025', as it is called, is open for enrolment by students from Standard V and above.

The two-day camp will be held on December 24-25, 26-27, and 28-29. The camp will run from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on each of these days, and the fee is ₹900.

Parents should arrange for their children's transportation from home to the zoo and back home. They should send their

children with a water bottle, snacks and fresh-cut fruits, says a press release.

The participants will receive a course kit that includes a student bag, writing pad, pen, activity sheets and an e-book on 'Animals in Vandalur Zoo'.

The benefits of the camp include being titled 'Zoo Ambassador' with a badge and certificate, a zoo passport with a validity period of one year that entitles them to 10 free visits and access to newsletters.

For details, log in to <https://aazp.in/wintercamp2025/>

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Pothys opens a new showroom



Pothys and Pothys Swarna Mahal opened an 'integrated' showroom on December 14 in Padi.

Spread across 5,00,000 square feet, the showroom is designed as a one-stop destination offering

textiles, jewellery, home essentials, lifestyle products and groceries.

The seven-floor showroom has dedicated each floor to a category such as ground floor for jewellery and sixth floor for groceries, vegetables and fruits.

As part of the opening offer, a 10 percent discount is given on textile products till December 21.

At the Swarna Mahal, ₹ 2,000 discount can be availed per sovereign on gold jewellery and a ₹10,000 per carat discount on diamond jewellery till December 31, said a release.

Hospital celebrates founder's day with blood donation drive

As part of the founders' day celebration, Be Well Hospitals organised a series of events to support those in need. Dr. C.J. Vetrievil is the founder of the hospital.

The hospitals organised a blood donation camp with Chennai Blood Centre, where the public and hospitals employees donated blood.

This was followed by free lunch for the residents of Charu Old Age Home and distribution of household essentials, including dhotis to underprivileged families in T. Nagar, said a release issued by the hospitals.



Festive family collection at Cotton House

Planning to shop for the whole family in one place? The Cotton House on Lattice Bridge Road in Thiruvanmiyur has budget-friendly clothes stocked especially for this season. For Christmas, the store has lightweight art silks, the latest collections in pattu silks, linen saris, soft silks, cotton silks, digitally printed chudidhars and dupattas. Tissue dhotis and shirts, pattu pavada and denims, sherwani, silk dhotis, t-shirts are among other items. Contact: 9176444440.

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Mushroom cultivation

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on mushroom cultivation of December 26 at its premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required to take part in the programme. For details, call 044 - 29530048

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My HEARTY GREETINGS Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2026 and Pongal / Makaravilakku / Makar Sankranti MaghBihu / Lohri / Uttarayan / Poush Sankranti

S.RAMALINGAM
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