

T. NAGAR

Saidapet » West Mambalam » Vadapalani » Porur » Kattupakkam » Irungattukottai » Nungambakkam » Manapakkam » Ashok Nagar » Valasaravakkam
Gerugambakkam » Mangadu » Choolaimedu » Egmore » K K Nagar » Kodambakkam » Virugambakkam » Somangalam » Poonamallee » Chetpet



A MILESTONE MEETING FOR THESE TOASTMASTERS

Chennai Toastmasters Club, which meets every Sunday in Anna Nagar, will be having its 1000th meeting today. **P3**



JAPANESE SPARROWHAWK SIGHTED IN CHENNAI

A sighting of a Japanese sparrowhawk with photos from the Adyar Estuary on November 7 marks the first evidential documentation of the bird in mainland India. **P6**



Liberty Bus stop in Kodambakkam. FILE PHOTO

'Frequent power cuts at Ambal Nagar'

K. SUBRAMANIAN

Power cuts occur almost every other day at Ambal Nagar and Balambika Nagar in Ramapuram. They power cuts last anywhere from one to three hours. And on some days, it is intermittent through the day. A few days ago, a power cut lasted six hours. In yet another instance, the power cut lasted nearly 12 hours. We are noticing this issue of frequent power cuts since February and it has aggravated in recent weeks. It is because the electricity transformers break down often. There are two electricity transformers installed decades ago and the

population has increased in the colony over the years and hence the existing transformers are unable to cater to the current demand. The residents association in this neighbourhood has made several complaints to Tamil Nadu Generation & Distribution Corporation Limited (TANGEDCO) but to no avail. Therefore, we seek compensation as per consumer guidelines prescribed by TANGEDCO. Around 500 households experience this problem.

K. Subramanian is the president of Ramapuram Makkal Nala Urimai Sangam, a residents welfare association in Ramapuram.

'Restoring old MTC bus services will benefit Rangarajapuram'

G. RANGARAJAN

Metropolitan Transport Corporation should introduce a few bus stops on Rangarajapuram Main Road in Kodambakkam for the benefit of Rangarajapuram residents.

On account of Metro Rail construction, buses from Broadway with destinations to KK Nagar, Iyppanthangal, Vadapalani and Saligramam are being diverted via Rangarajapuram Main Road in Kodambakkam.

We need stops on Rangarajapuram Main Road because there are no dedicated bus services for Rangarajapuram.

It should be noted that the couple of bus services meant for the neighbourhood of Rangarajapuram was withdrawn a few years ago for reasons that still remain a mystery.

They are 11D (KK Nagar - Broadway) and 12C (Saligramam - Mylapore). They were operated via the main roads of Rangarajapuram: Rangarajapuram Main Road, Corporation Colony Main Road, and Vishwanathapuram Main Road and therefore covered a good section of the neighbourhood.

But now, commuters of Rangarajapuram have to go to any of these nearby stops (North Usman Road in T Nagar, Brindavan Street in West Mambalam, Samiyar Ma-

dam on Dr Ambedkar Road, Liberty on First Main Road) to board buses. All these stops are quite a distance away.

But buses of other routes pass through Rangarajapuram Main Road but we are unable to board them. MTC should introduce a few stops on Rangarajapuram Main Road. Such an arrangement would reduce the problem to an extent. Because, the traffic flow is one-way on Rangarajapuram Main Road and therefore accessing buses to Broadway covering Egmore and Central railway stations will continue to be a problem unless MTC restores those terminated services.

Further, MTC should introduce a small bus service connecting Rangarajapuram and Kodambakkam railway station.

G. Rangarajan is a resident of Rangarajapuram

KARTHIGAI EKADASHI

Abhang Mela

11 Abhangs
11 Ragas
11 Composers

Vid. UMA KUMAR
Carnatic Singer, Switzerland

Sunday, 30 November 2025
6.00 p.m.

KRISHNA GANA SABHA
Kamakoti Hall, Chennai

A V MANIKANTAN
Mridangam

GOMATHISANKAR
Harmonium

RAM KHADSE
Tabla

All are Welcome

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.

‘Calf rescued from soak pit’



P. Senthil Kumar

Soak pits of most of the houses in Iyppathangal Village Panchayat are on the road. A good number of them are poorly maintained and open. This poses a risk to the public. A calf fell into one such soak pit at VGN Nagar a month ago. The residents welfare association of VGN Nagar called the Tamil Nadu Fire &



Rescue Service to rescue the calf. Iyppathangal Village Panchayat should ensure people keep their soak pits covered and do not pose any risk to the public. It should be noted a similar incident occurred in 2018 in some other neighbourhood of Iyppanthangal where a cow fell into a narrow well.

P. Senthil Kumar is a resident of Iyppanthangal

‘Danger lurking in Porur service lane’

SANGEETHA D

The service lane of Chennai Bypass near Vanagaram toll plaza (also known as Porur toll plaza) is unsafe: in some sections of the service lane, the drains are wide open. They are not even barricaded. It is frightening to use this stretch as the risk of slipping into an open drain is high. The lanes are narrow and witnesses heavy traffic.

With vehicles passing close by and the drains remaining completely exposed, pedestrians are forced to walk just inches away from the dangerous spot.

These pedestrians are also at the risk of being hit by vehicles.



The drain at the service lane near Vanagaram Toll plaza.
PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B

The lane becomes quite slippery during rains. The open drains can be missed. This is the status for over two years. These drains

should be covered at the earliest.

Sangeetha D is a resident of Porur

For the love of a *public space*

Residents living around temples would want the Mada streets to be freed of clutter. Chennai has witnessed several efforts towards this end; the latest exercise of this kind was launched recently



PRINCE FREDERICK

When an event kicks off, it often picks up momentum on its own, without any extraneous push. The best time to suss out an event is when it lies sprawled on the drawing board. Better still, when it is being hurriedly dressed up for the stage. The loose ends remain untied. And the organisers are so caught up in the last-minute scramble that they forget to turn on their charisma and those headline-making sentences remain unsaid. It is in that raw moment that the true strength of what is being done is on display; the real zeal of those powering the activity is evident.

The *Hindu Downtown* caught Project Thiruvanniyur Mada Street in the inconvenient last hour before it was being presented in an event (a two-day event) to all the stakeholders of the mada streets around Marundeeswarar temple – the residents, shopkeepers, tem-

ple goers, the officials and even motorists. The Project seeks to reimagine the mada streets around the temple: for now, just two of them, East Mada Street and North Mada Street. A detailed deck on what these streets look like now and what they ought to look like at all times has been prepared.

The event and the project it launched more than passed muster, the effort evidently powered by a passionate love for this space, often held hostage by carelessness. A series of careless acts, often coming together in a deadly cocktail of chaos.

Carelessly parked vehicles. Cattle allowed to roam on the streets carelessly. Carelessly flung garbage, ignoring a row of bins at the corner of East Mada Street and North Mada Street.

The project receives motive power from residents and lovers of this piece of Thiruvanniyur. This collective includes two architects and urban designers. Dhanya Rajagopal of The Thinking Cauldron



Images clicked minutes before the two-day event introducing Project Thiruvanniyur Mada Street was kickstarted, on November 14, 2025.
PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

lives at Legionowo in Mazowieckie, Poland. Whenever she returns to Chennai, she comes back home to Thiruvanniyur, this part of Thiruvanniyur where she grew up. This personal reality drives Dhanya's motivation to make the space pleasant for every stakeholder by ensuring vehicles stay parked where they should be, and the streets are free of litter; and movement of mo-

torists and pedestrians is not hampered. The other architect plus urban planner Pavithra Sriram of Design Co:Lab is also associated with the project in a personal capacity.

The bill of fare at the November 14-15 event – an archival photo exhibition, a history walk through Marundeeswarar temple, exploration of traditional games that

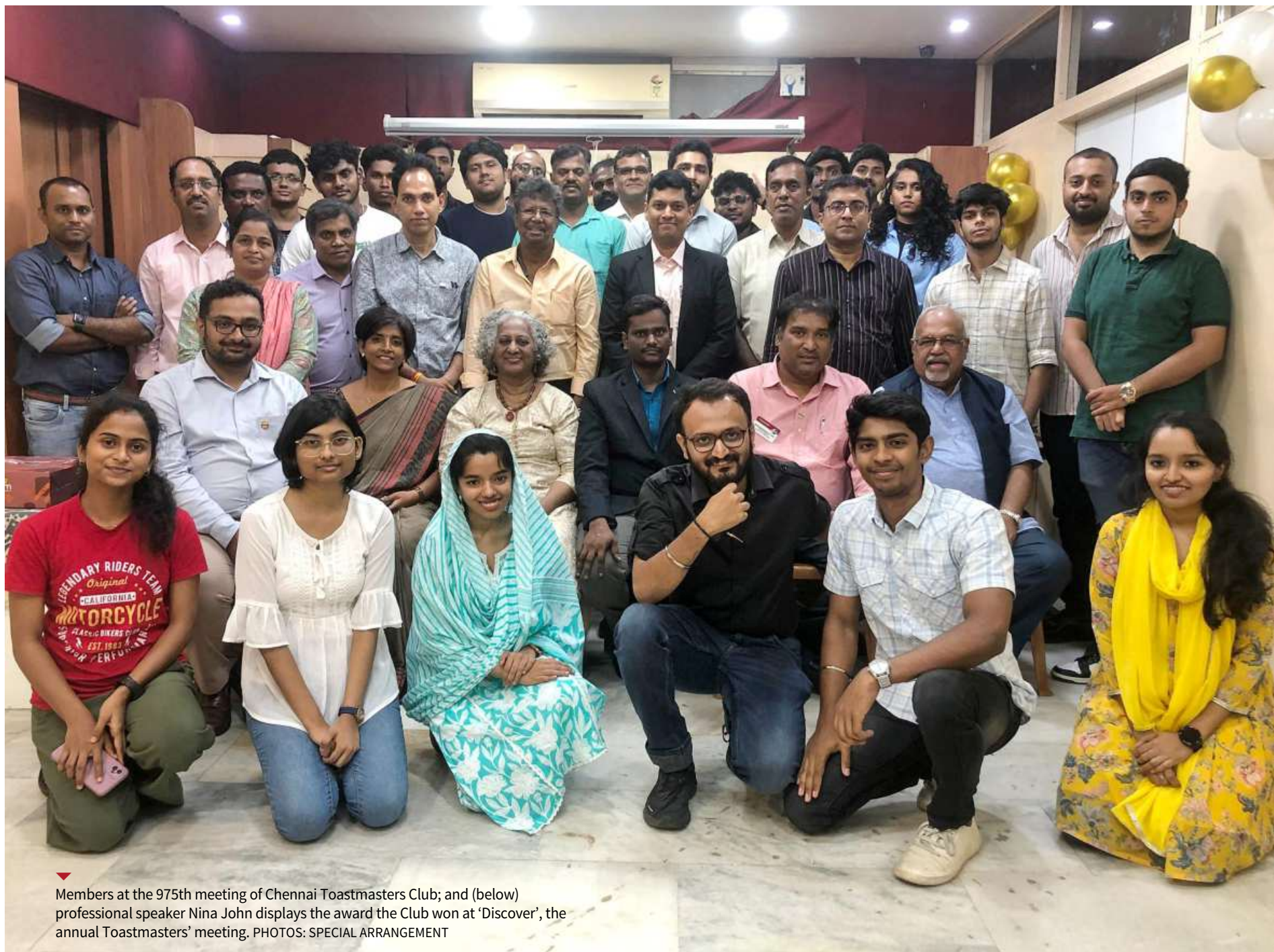
date back to the time when the temple was established and live sketching programme – were as much by residents as it was for residents. The live sketching was organised by Chennai Weekend Artists and the history walk around the temple was led by historian Pradeep Chakravarthy and founder of Kreedha Games, Vinita Sidhartha.

And the archival photo exhibition was not born in the government archives department or any private archival facility, but was stitched together by residents, digging through their old albums. Check the archival photos (including the one of the plane belonging to the Madras Flying Club making an unplanned, emergency landing on the Thiruvanniyur beach) at @projectthiruvanniyurmada on Instagram.

The organisers were handing out postcards carrying pictures of this part of Thiruvanniyur to shopkeepers. These postcards can be bought and the proceeds from their sale will be ploughed back into the resources required to support Project Thiruvanniyur Mada Street. Four benches made from repurposed wood, two for East Mada Street and the other two for North Mada Street will be placed there after the event.

Dhanya knows this Project is in for the long haul, as it requires interactions and promises from a variety of diverse stakeholders: on the official and governmental side, the HR&CE Department and Greater Chennai Corporation; on the social side, residents, shopkeepers and visitors.

That would call for many conversations with different points of focus.



Members at the 975th meeting of Chennai Toastmasters Club; and (below) professional speaker Nina John displays the award the Club won at 'Discover', the annual Toastmasters' meeting. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A milestone meeting for these **Toastmasters**

Chennai Toastmasters Club is having its 1000th meeting today; the grand meetup, to take place at Sterling Club in Nungambakkam, is open to registration from outsiders

Toastmasters meet every Sunday with their respective club members. Today, Chennai Toastmasters Club (CTM) would also be meeting up as usual, but there would be something unusual about the meeting, hugely unusual. For it is not every Sunday that you get to call your meeting, "the 1000th". Today, these Toastmasters can: it is CTM's 1000th meeting since its inception in 2004.

Chennai Toastmasters Club (CTM), which largely serves Anna Nagar and surrounding areas though people from elsewhere are also associated with it, is directly affiliated with Toastmasters International.

According to a press release, CTM has the distinction of being

the first Toastmasters Club in Tamil Nadu. A community club open to all, CTM has contributed to the remarkable growth of the Toastmasters movement in the region, which now boasts more than 175 clubs across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

CTM is often referred to as the "Lighthouse Club" of Tamil Nadu – for a good reason. Its early members laid the foundation for the Toastmasters movement in the State by shaping core principles, practices and processes. Over the years, the club has produced numerous district leaders and champions, further strengthening its legacy, the press release adds.

Today, CTM comprises approximately 40 active members, each embodying the Toastmasters spirit



of growth, learning, and camaraderie. Members represent a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, ranging from students to homemakers,

CTM is often referred to as the "Lighthouse Club" of Tamil Nadu — for a good reason. Its early members laid the foundation for the Toastmasters movement in the State by shaping core principles, practices and processes

from chartered accountants to IT professionals and entrepreneurs, and from Gen Z youth to senior citizens. The club has played a significant role in facilitating both personal and professional development, with many members going on to excel in corporate and entrepreneurial domains, says the release.

As Chennai Toastmasters Club is

set to walk past – nay, talk past – the significant milestone of a 1000 meetings, it needs to be noted that only a few clubs worldwide have achieved this distinction.

CTM boasts an enviable pageant of acclaimed Toastmasters over the years. The list includes Nina John, professional speaker, coach and author; and late Abraham Zachariah, chartered accountant and member of WCC Board of Studies and several other institutions.

All those interested in attending CTM's milestone meeting can call any of these two numbers (94441 86014 / 99620 50708) or register at <https://tinyurl.com/CTM1000>. On-the-spot registration at the venue (Sterling Club, Railway Officers Club, Sterling Road, Nungambakkam) is also possible.

KIDS craft change

Around Children's Day, little nimble fingers demonstrated how art forms that use eco-friendly and even discarded materials can be part of everyday living as well as celebrations

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

What if children are empowered to take on the mantle of teachers, and adults are at the receiving end of knowledge transfer. What if children school their elders in the grammar of conscious living. What if children are conversant with the idioms of sustainability, source discards and transform them into desirable, eco-friendly, everyday utilitarian objects and eye-catching decor. On

November 15, at the time of this article going to press, Kid's Kraft Carnival 2025 – Edition 2 (organised by Boutique Bougainvillea and The Kraft Faktor) was under way in Velachery, demonstrating that these what-ifs can be realities. Around a dozen children in the 10 to 15 age bracket were holding sessions on a variety of art-based practices defined by sustainable processes. The children showed the attendees how to make origami-based decor, quilled wall decor,

quilled jewellery, artwork on upcycled boards, clay-based art and palm-leaf decor. Various other art forms were also in attendance (crochet, macrame and decoupage among them) and all of them were viewed through the lens of sustainability and the eyes of the young ones that have mastered them through sustained practice. Some of these children have taken these skillsets beyond weekend sessions to build brands that fuse sustainability with art.



Undoing a knotty problem

Thirteen-year-old Keshavanath Shankar stumbled into macramé a year and a half ago, when idle hours at home and the absence of a television demanded a more creative diversion. Crochet proving difficult, he began experimenting with knots after noticing friends and online creators working with macramé. "It just felt comfortable," he says of the craft that has since become his daily practice.

Keshavanath works exclusively with sustainably sourced cotton

cords from Craft Affairs. "Even the cotton is eco-friendly," he notes, aligning his materials with the sustainability principles taught to him. He primarily makes pouches and keychains that are priced between ₹60 and ₹250 though larger pieces such as wall hangings and bottle holders demand considerably more time and effort.

His process is exacting. He begins by measuring and cutting cords before knotting them into their final form. "I enjoy almost every part, except the last bit where I

have to tie every single knot and cut it," he admits. Bigger customised orders come with challenges: "I pull the threads so many times that my skin starts shedding." Mistakes, however small, are never ignored. "I undo every knot until it is fixed."

For Keshavanath, sustainability is a responsibility. "My generation deserves a cleaner world," he says. His message to buyers is simple: choose products that are stylish and eco-friendly – creations that do not add to the planet's burden.

Decoupage for the planet

With scraps of paper, old sheets, and dried flowers, 10-year-old Maya Ram, a Grade 5 student at Adyar Theosophical Society, turns everyday objects into decoupage creations. Decoupage, the craft of layering paper and fabric to decorate surfaces, allows her to repurpose discarded materials into functional décor.

Using torn tissue papers, old bedsheets, dried flowers, and leftover materials, Maya applies layers onto circular pots to create sustainable décor. "I have also decomposed tissue papers with leaves, flowers, floral designs, and other patterns," says Maya, a resident of Indira Nagar, Adyar. She can also personalise items: "If a customer wants something specific, like a dog design, I can try to find decomposed tissue paper or fabric for them, though it will cost a little more."

She carefully applies the papers to circular pots, a process that demands patience and attention. "The paper is rectangular, but the pot is circular, so it is hard to place it correctly without

bubbles," she says. Each piece takes between one and one-and-a-half hours, depending on size and design, and she finishes them with a sealant, choosing eco-friendly options wherever possible.

Maya began her practice at seven, creating items for charity with guidance from her mother. "My mother helped me with pricing since I did not know how to do it," she recalls. Now she is developing her own brand, Fusspots, with the tagline: "Be fussy, be eco-friendly" calculating prices based on materials and effort.

Beyond selling, Maya encourages environmental awareness, refurbishing old pots and showing how everyday items can have a second life. "I want buyers to see how sustainable products can also be décor," she says.

She also adapts her designs to meet personal requests, experimenting with shapes, patterns and customised themes. She points out that each project teaches her new skills in planning, pricing and sourcing responsibly.



Leafing through art

At ten years, P.S. Thara, from Kasturba Nagar, Adyar and a student at St. Patrick's High School (CISCE) is already carving a niche for herself in the world of sustainable craft. Her journey began at the age of nine during an Organic Farmers Market exhibition in Kasturba Na-

gar, where she was introduced to the art of palm-leaf crafting. "On the first day, we made fishes, headbands, bracelets and watches," she recalls. Thara has mastered a range of designs with palm leaves, including stars, squares, and diamonds. "The classic is one star and three

diamonds," she explains, "but if they want, they can customise it."

Palm leaves, the state tree of Tamil Nadu, are celebrated not only for their cultural significance but also for their ecological benefits. Biodegradable, naturally durable, and requiring no chemical treatment, they have emerged as a sustainable alternative in contemporary craft. "Since it's natural, it forms a thin layer of dust. You have to dust it with a paintbrush every time," Thara explains, highlighting both the material's charm and its quirks.

For Thara, the craft is more than a creative pursuit. "It makes me feel calm and improves my concentration," she says. Encouraged by her mother – "She said I could do it again if I committed to it", Thara has continued to refine her skills.

Just ahead of the exhibition, where she was going to teach visitors, Thara said: "I want to teach them. If they want, they can learn, and if they want, they can buy it."



LIFFY THOMAS

A gazette notification dated October 31, 2025 by the Housing and Urban Development Department of Tamil Nadu issuing amendments to the Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules, 2019 augurs well for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the state, and certainly in Chennai, a burgeoning metropolis with a galloping growth in the housing sector.

In residential buildings, a charging point for electric vehicles needs to be provided in every car parking and two wheeler parking space. In buildings where the number of dwelling units exceeds 50, car and two-wheeler parking space earmarked for visitors shall be provided with fast charging points. However, buildings up to 14 m in height not exceeding eight dwelling units or 750 square meters of built-up area are exempt from this requirement.

Those working in the renewable energy space note that before apartment complexes start drawing up plans to provide EV infrastructure, it would help to first invest in solar panels and this would be a strategic move. The synergy between the two technologies can create a sustainable energy ecosystem along with huge savings on the electricity bill.

Already, Tamil Nadu Combined Development and Building Rules 2019 mandates that at least one third of terrace space be reserved for placement of solar photovoltaic panels to get a completion certi-

Let the *sun shine* on your *EV moves*

With Tamil Nadu expecting apartments of a certain size to integrate EV charging infrastructure into its workaday reality, communities would do well to tap into solar energy to make the bill palatable



File photo of solar panels installed at the Moore Market suburban station complex

cate from CMDA.

Ashok Kumar, president, Tamil Nadu Solar Energy Developers Association, gives three reasons why

they are pushing for greater adoption of solar energy.

For domestic use, consumers can avail a subsidy under Prime Mi-

nister Surya Ghar Scheme for a minimum of 3 kW photovoltaic solar plant. "Since the GST tax slab was revised, the entire cost of installing

a solar power unit has come down by another 5%," says Ashok. "The excess energy generated is fed into the grid, so one can use solar energy 24x7 and that energy can be used to charge an EV vehicle."

Residential vs commercial tariff
Krutivas Pushkar, managing director of Pushkar Properties and a member of Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI), says today solar and EV infrastructure are sought-after amenities in residential projects, but some factors are hindering their progress. For instance, TNEB takes more than six months to get a solar unit installed on the rooftop connected to the grid.

"When you are coming up with a residential project with a solar unit on the rooftop, the common areas in the blocks (which include lifts/lights/landscaping/ borewell motors) come under the commercial tariff, where the rates are much higher than what is charged under residential tariff," says Krutivas.

So even if a community has been harnessing the power of the sun, they do not get "unit to unit" deduction. "You produce whatever you want and give it to the grid, the TNEB gives you ₹3.80 per unit rebate, whereas for the commercial tariff, a charge of around ₹8 per unit is borne by the residents association. This is something CREDAI is fighting as we want the common areas in the residential block to be brought under residential tariff or it will not encourage people to switch to this renewable source of energy," says Krutivas.

Power comes at *zero cost*

Praveen Kumar P.A. invested in a rooftop solar unit in 2021; in the years that followed, the demand for power increased with the arrival of two electric vehicles. Still, the family enjoys a nil electricity bill; and the initial investment has been covered



Praveen Kumar P.A. says the solar rooftop has been placed in such a manner that there is no wastage of space

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Praveen Kumar P.A.'s electricity bill is easy on his domestic budget. It is an almost nil power bill despite two electrical vehicles being in the picture. He has to thank the 8 kW solar roof unit he has installed on the terrace of his 13-unit apartment complex for the heart-warming number on the power bill.

In 2021, when Praveen purchased a flat in Velachery, he convinced the other owners to allow him to use the terrace space to in-

stall solar panels. It is an elevated structure so that roof space is not wasted and also helps neighbours to use the space under the panel as drying and leisure space.

Initially, the family went in for four kW, deciding they will increase the capacity when they invest in electric vehicles they added another four kW.

In November 2024, an electric scooter arrived, followed by an electric car in April 2025. With these arrivals, the solar unit was scaled up.

The 8 kW solar system gener-

ates 32 units a day (kilo watt hours) and every billing cycle (once in two months) it generates close to 2000 units.

"My car when fully charged supports me for 500 km and takes 70 units per charge," says the businessman who is in his early 30s.

"Our four-bedroom flat consumes 2,000 units on an average and going with the Government

charge of ₹11 for anything above 1000 units I should be incurring a bi-monthly bill of ₹ 22,000," he explains.

Since 2023, he pays a minimum amount of ₹800 for using solar (as per the rule that for every 100 per kW)

"That's a fixed bill," he says.

Praveen has more numbers to show that the ₹4 lakh investment he made in 2021 for the 8 kW solar

plant is proving to be profitable.

"I covered the investment cost in three years. The best part of having a rooftop solar unit is that it has a life span of 25 years as there are no batteries to maintain and other components come with a warranty," he adds.

Over the years, inspired by Praveen, six other families in the community have invested in rooftop solar units.

Japanese sparrowhawk sighted in Chennai

Breeding in East Asia and wintering in South East Asia, this bird is known to show up in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A sighting of a Japanese sparrowhawk with photos from the Adyar Estuary on November 7 marks the first evidential documentation of the bird in mainland India

PRINCE FREDERICK

Touch upon this topic about the Adyar Estuary, and one ends up in an ouroboric, cyclical reasoning. The conclusion takes one to the starting point which feeds back into the same conclusion. It is the chicken-and-egg conundrum in a birding contest.

The T20I strike rate Abishek Sharma currently enjoys among batters, the Adyar Estuary enjoys among birding patches in and around Chennai in terms of hypertexts (sightings of unexpected feathers). Every birder worth their pair of binoculars would have clocked in numerous hours at the Adyar Estuary. And that begets the conundrumal question: do birders flock to the Adyar Estuary in large numbers because it throws up avian surprises regularly or does the Adyar Estuary throw up avian surprises regularly because birders flock to it in large numbers?

Forget its overall rare bird stats. Over the last couple of months, the Adyar Estuary has hosted a Saunders's tern (in fact, two) for a while, supported what seems an Isabelline wheatear's day-trip to Chennai; and in the week that went by, it had a dalliance with a Japanese sparrowhawk.

No mistyping there; a Japanese sparrowhawk indeed. The lucky pair of eyes that peered through the binoculars belongs to Ramanan R.V., a Madras Naturalists Society (MNS) member and a birder.

The encounter with the Accipiter hawk happened in the liminal zone at the Adyar Estuary

where one breathes in the same air that carries the broken bridge and the peripheral part of the compound wall enclosing the Theosophical Society campus. This part of the Estuary can be christened "unexpected birds check-in counter", given the enviable aggregate of such sightings it boasts.

Ramanan shares the details of the encounter with *The Hindu Downtown*: "On the morning of November 7, around 6.30 a.m., there was a commotion inside the TS campus. Drongos were shouting, chasing some bird and

then all of a sudden this bird came out and it started chasing a green bee eater. It went on two sorties trying to catch the green bee eater, but was unsuccessful in the attempt. Initially I was looking through the binoculars and I thought it was the usual Shikra. Then I noticed it was on the leaner side and slightly smaller than a Shikra. I then took my camera and captured a few shots of the raptor."

Ramanan went to the patch on two subsequent days, but the bird did not show up.

Ramanan notes that photos of the bird were "subsequently shared with 'ProjectRaptor-Watch' of the Madras Naturalists' Society (MNS) for assistance with identification. The initial impression, given the location, was that of a Eurasian sparrowhawk (Acci-

Recent rare avian sightings at Adyar Estuary

Saunders's tern: For around three weeks in September
Isabelline wheatear: October 2
Japanese sparrowhawk: November 7

pter nissus). However, a detailed analysis of the photographs by the group confirmed the bird's identity as an immature Japanese sparrowhawk (*Tachyspiza gularis*)." Both are members of the family accipitridae.

Ramanan remarks that the photographs came under the knitted brows of Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi and Nirav Bhatt,

The Japanese sparrowhawk photographed by Madras Naturalists Society member Ramanan R.V. at Adyar Estuary on November 7, 2025.

luminaries on raptors.

The Japanese sparrowhawk shuttles between its breeding home in East Asia, which includes China, Japan, Korea and Siberia and its wintering home in South-east Asia.

Ramanan elaborates, "Within the Indian subcontinent, its occurrence has been documented as a migrant and winter visitor primarily, if not exclusively, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This is the first photographic sight record of the species from mainland India. There are records from Walong and Namdapha in Arunachal Pradesh. Without documentation, these records are just claims. This is the first time we are documenting the sighting of a Japanese sparrowhawk in mainland India and then showing it."

Identification pointers

Here are selective points from the observations Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi made based on the photos of the Japanese sparrowhawk Ramanan R.V. shared with him. These are identification pointers that rule out "lookalikes".

Pointer one: "Lack of black-tipped outer primaries eliminates Chinese sparrowhawk."

Pointer two: "Based on the number of black-barring in the primaries (especially P8) and the number of primary fingers, we can eliminate Eurasian sparrowhawk. Also mesial stripe was not visible in all image angles. In initial review, I could not count

primaries right with available images and mistook the gap in outer primary as missing primary. Eurasian sparrowhawk in all ages have good protruding P5 finger."

Pointer three: "Based on the indistinct mesial stripe, the number of bands in P8 (less than six in Besra) and considering they are residents with not much of movements recorded, we can eliminate Besra as well."

Building up the the identification profile with these pointers, Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi concludes: "Leaving us the best contender as Japanese sparrowhawk, for which all these elimination pointers fit in."





VS Hospitals launches HOPE

VS Hospitals, a cancer care center in the city, has launched a Holistic Oncology Program for Excellence (HOPE). This framework uniquely

blends targeted treatment methods with AI-powered nutrition support.

The hospital has also established a dedicated Department of

Precision Oncology. These initiatives work together to improve diagnosis, reduce treatment burdens, boost survival rates, and enhance the quality of life for patients and their families, said a release.

Rohini Molleti, actress and social worker, launched the initiatives in the presence of Dr. S. Subramanian, senior medical oncologist, and founder of the hospital; Dr. Nithya Sridharan, associate director and senior consultant, medical oncology; and Dr. Vijay G., consultant, adult and paediatric medical oncologist.

The hospital signed an MoU with Tweak and Eat, a US-based health and wellness AI company, to provide its patients with real-time personalised meal plans and ongoing dietary adjustments during and after treatment, said the release.

Dr. Subramanian said, "Our HOPE model is built on the belief that healing is never a straight line. It requires medical accuracy, emotional strength, good nutrition, rehabilitation, and social support working in unison."

Seniors urge expansion of welfare schemes

The Old Age Pensioners Association functioning under the Mudhir Solai Trust, organised an elders' meet at M.G.R. Colony in Anna Nagar on Sunday, November 9, 2025. Around 100 low-income senior citizens from Vysarpadi, Perambur, Triplicane, Mylapore, and Anna Nagar took part in the meet.

Participants noted that the state government's Thayumanavar scheme which delivers ration items to the homes of senior citizens aged 65 years and above, has been beneficial. They urged that the eligibility age be reduced to 60 years. They also stressed on free flu vaccinations for the elderly during winter, citing their vulnerability to respiratory infections.

The participants further sought a reduction in the eligibility age for Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

from 70 to 60 years so that more seniors can avail themselves of the Rs 5 lakh free health insurance cover, and asked to restore railway travel concessions.

They also requested political parties in Tamil Nadu to include key elder-care demands in their 2026 assembly election manifestos such as increasing the old age pension from Rs1,200 to Rs3,000 a month, establishing more day-care centres, providing mobile health-care service, starting geriatric department in all taluk government hospitals, reserving 10% of houses in housing board schemes for seniors, issuing identity cards for easy access to welfare schemes, and officially observing World Elders Day on October 1 each year.

The meeting was coordinated by M. Dayalasankar, Secretary, Old Age Pensioners Association.

Baashyaam achieves a milestone



Baashyaam Constructions achieved a remarkable milestone on October 31. The real estate company completed the customer handover for 120 residents on a single day at an event. These residents will soon be moving into The Peak in Ashok Nagar. Comprising a total of 240 units, the high-rise apartment has a clubhouse, grand entrance lobby, elegant main lobby, well-equipped gymnasium, indoor games area, multipurpose hall and an elevated swimming pool.

The event demonstrates a commitment to excellence, punctual delivery,



and customer satisfaction, said a press release.

Finals of inter-school quiz today at MRC Nagar

Battle of Brains, an inter-school quiz competition, reaches its thrilling finale on November 16 at Image Auditorium, MRC Nagar from 6 p.m. onwards.

The top six school teams that have battled their way through the zonal and semifinal rounds will vie for the title and exciting prizes worth ₹4 lakhs, said a release.

Organised by Casagrand, in association with Nexus Consulting, the 'Battle of Brains' - Chennai edition witnessed participation from over 800 students representing more than 100

schools. Television anchor Gopinath will be the chief guest. Venkatesh Srinivasan, quizmaster and founder Nexus Consulting and Gautam Agarwal, chief operating officer, Casagrand, are the other special guests.

The organisers have announced a wildcard round, giving students another chance to participate. There is also a special round for the audience.

Interested students from classes VI to IX can register for the wildcard round at www.casagrand.co.in/bobquiz or call 7019754533.

Carnatic music event today

Eye hospital Radhatri Nethralaya is organising its annual Carnatic music event called Nethra 25 on November 16 at Krishna Gana Sabha in T Nagar. Time: At 6 p.m. According to a press release, vocalists Ranjani and Gayatri well known as "The RaGa Sisters" will be performing.

The event aims to raise awareness about retinopathy of prematurity, a blinding condition affecting preterm babies, add the release.

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Applications invited

The Chennai Division of the Southern Railway has invited applications from interested candidates for the Mobile Unreserved Ticketing System (M-UTS) Sahayaks.

The M-UTS Sahayaks' Scheme launched recently at Chennai Central Railway Station is proving to be beneficial to passengers by making unreserved ticketing faster, more convenient, and digitally accessible, said a release. The M-UTS Sahayaks are authorised personnel trained in mobile ticketing and have been issuing unreserved tickets through the M-UTS mobile application. The Railway is planning to extend it to other busy railway stations across the division.

The application process will open on November 26, and forms can be downloaded from the Southern Railway's official website. Preference will be given to local applicants.

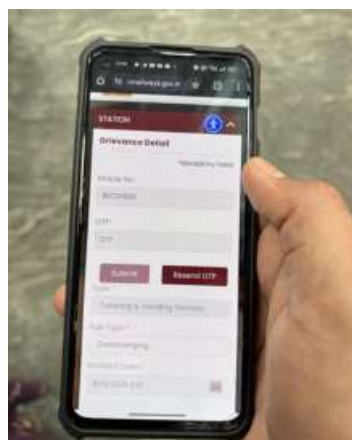
Applications can be downloaded at https://sr.indianrailways.gov.in/sr/notice/1762348518026_Press%20notification%20-%20051125.pdf, says a release from the Southern Railway.

New grievance redressal mode

QR code-based system to lodge complaints against catering stalls in railway stations



Chennai Division of Southern Railway has launched a QR code-based system to register complaints or share feedback regarding catering stalls. According to a press release, complaints regarding overcharging, deficiency in service, food quality, quantity, non-availability of food and water, and hygiene can be registered



through this QR code-enabled system.

How it works

QR code will be displayed at all the catering stalls. It is unique to each shop. Upon scanning, essential details such as the stall's location and station code will be provided and will be directed to the Railmadad portal, the official grievance re-

dressal platform of Indian Railways. To ensure secure access, passengers are required to enter their mobile number and authenticate via a one-time password. Once authenticated, they can select the grievance type, provide a brief description and submit. A message acknowledging the receipt of the complaint along with a unique reference number would be sent to the registered mobile number allowing passengers to track the status of their complaint. The same would be sent to alert Catering Inspectors and Station Managers, enabling them to attend to the complaint promptly.

How does the new mode help

The complainant will not go wrong or commit mistakes in furnishing details about the stall as that is taken care by the unique QR code. Next, this enables instant registration of a complaint. Also, the system strengthens the monitoring of catering units, adds the release.

Aadhaar centre set up at Maduvankarai

The Department of Information Technology & Digital Services has set up a permanent Aadhaar service centre at the Greater Chennai Corporation's Division Office of Ward 172 at Maduvankarai in Guindy.

According to a press release, this is one among the 50 new permanent Aadhaar service centres set up by the department across the State. Including the new centres, the total number of permanent centres has increased from 587 to 637.

The Minister for Information Technology & Digital Services, Palanivel Thiagarajan, inaugurated the new centres on November 10 through video conferencing.

Also, 79 school-level camps were inaugurated for this year and another 379 will be covered from this December, adds the release.

According to an official, "A large number of students need to be enrolled across the State. The department aims to enrol them in a four-month enrolment drive which will begin this December."

IOCL organises graffiti design contest to mark vigilance week

As part of Vigilance Awareness Week, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) organised a Graffiti Design Contest across four colleges in Chennai. Aimed at promoting the theme of vigilance and integrity among students, this contest by IOCL was supported by *The Hindu* Future India Club. The colleges that participated in the event are: Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College for Women; Dharmamurthi Rao Bahadur Calavala Cunnam Chetty's Hindu College; Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun

Jain College for Women; and Annai Veilankanni's College of Arts and Science. This year's theme is "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility".

The event was graced by D. Sureshkumar, general manager (vigilance), and Senthamil Selvan, general manager (lubes), from IOCL. They interacted with students and shared valuable insights on the importance of vigilance in everyday life. They also administered the Vigilance Pledge to all participants, reinforcing the commitment to transparency and ethical prac-



es. P.B. Vaneetha, Principal of Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College for Women, along with all Heads of Departments,

were present and extended their support to this initiative aimed at fostering awareness and responsibility among the youth.

Workshop on beekeeping

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on beekeeping on November 20. According to a press release, participants will learn about types of honey bee, tools used in beekeeping and harvesting of honey.

Another workshop on chocolate making will be held on November 21.

The sessions will be held at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For details, call 044 - 29530048.

Three-day training session on baking

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME -Tamil Nadu, is conducting a workshop on baking from November 25 to 27 at its premises at SIDCO Industrial Estate, Guindy. Time: From: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a press release, the workshop will focus on preparation of bakery pro-

ducts such as cookies, biscuits, and cakes made from millets and wheat.

Participants will also learn about government subsidies and loans.

Those above 18 years of age with a minimum educational qualification of class 10 can apply. Hostel facility is also available. For details, call 8668102600 / 9943685468.



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