

ANNA NAGAR

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ANNA NAGAR

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A melody to inspire youngsters to say no to drugs

An economics professor at Annai Violet Arts and Science College in Ambattur uses a combination of creative tools to spread an anti-drugs message

LIFFY THOMAS

Enakku vendam namakku vendanda pothai/ Enakku vendam namakku vendanda!

Pothai oziyattum pathai melerattum/ Elanjargal valkai Olorattum!

V. Anbarasu, head of the department and assistant professor of economics at Annai Violet Arts and Science College in Ambattur, breaks into this jingle multiple times during a conversation with this journalist. This anti-drug song which presents the idea that “youth is the future, therefore celebrate life” is among the many initiatives taken by the college to get youngsters to address the dangers of substance abuse, which got the college first prize in the Chennai District Awards conducted by the State Government.

“If you have to get the attention of youngsters then music and arts should be the medium,” says Anbarasu, who wrote the lyrics

for the song and also sung it at the in-house studio in the college with the help of students from the Visual Communication Department.

The video shot at different locations in the college also has three NSS students garnering attention by tapping their feet to music. It was released by K. Shankar, Commissioner of Police, Avadi, last year and uploaded on YouTube.

During campaigns outside the college, the song is played at busy junctions, bus stands and markets to get people’s attention, after which students perform a mime or a skit to promote the idea of a drug-free society.

The college’s FM channel also drums up support for the campaign. When Anbarasu visits neighbouring colleges, he makes sure the song is played.

“There are no metrics to measure how this campaign has touched people but to get a testimonial or when a student walks up to



A street play by students aimed at creating awareness.

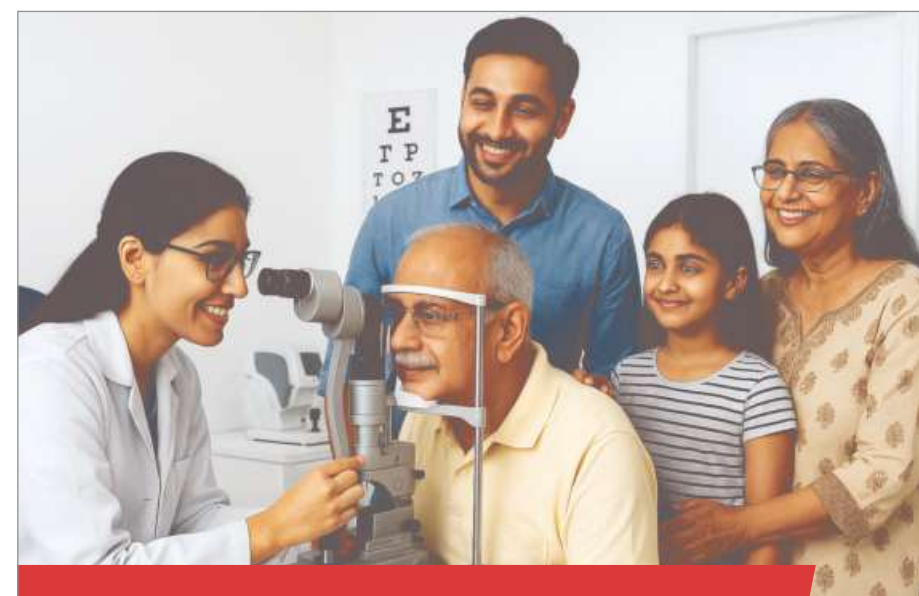
the college, he has composed songs to get students to pay their fees and be regular to classes and also to wear a helmet while riding a two-wheeler.

“I love to write songs on the spot; and with a catchy tune, a song can draw students’ attention,” says Anbarasu, tuning in to a song he composed to encourage students to donate blood.

When a shop selling cigarettes within a 100-yard radius of an educational institution comes into view, the faculty and his team do not fail to point out that it is violating a rule. “When they do not heed, we place a complaint on the “Drug-Free Tamil Nadu” mobile app. Based on such complaints, the police have taken action,” he adds.

tell them that the skit was an eye opener we know there has been impact,” says the 51-year-old faculty who is a resident of Puzhal.

Creating awareness through interactive mediums is not new to this economics faculty. As the former NSS programme officer in



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‘New SWD raises the **risk of electrocution**’

Residents want GCC to correct the design flaws in the stormwater drains on East Main Road in Anna Nagar West Extension and desist from constructing a fourth SWD on the same road

J.M.S. NAGARJUNAN

Following complaints raised by Anna Nagar West Extension Association, Greater Chennai Corporation has suspended work on the construction of stormwater drain on East Main Road at Anna Nagar West Extension.

Officials who inspected the site last week in response to our complaints acknowledged that our concerns were justified and have accordingly put the work on hold. We appreciate this prompt action. However, the drain already constructed is fundamentally flawed. It will not serve its intended purpose and, in fact, poses significant risks to the public. We therefore request that the structure be demolished and the road cleared.

Here are the reasons. It is constructed almost closer to the middle of the road and that has narrowed the motorable stretch resulting in traffic congestion. There are schools in the vicinity and therefore, the road witnesses heavy traffic.

Being nearly one-and-a-half feet



Stormwater drain construction on East Main Road at Anna Nagar West Extension. PHOTO: AKHILA EASWARAN

the risk of electrocution in the event of water leakage. It will also hinder the electricity department's ability to conduct routine maintenance or attend to faults. We understand that the electricity department has already escalated this safety issue to the authorities concerned.

It may also be noted that three stormwater drains already exist on East Main Road, but none functions effectively because of structural flaws, resulting in waterlogging. Instead of rectifying the issues in the existing drains, Greater Chennai Corporation has begun constructing a fourth drain on the same stretch. This approach defies logic. Rainwater-harvesting percolation pits would have been a far more effective and economical solution.

J.M.S. Nagarjunan is the secretary of Anna Nagar West Extension Association

above road level, the new drain would struggle to take in rainwater. In addition, the elevated drain

poses a challenge to residents as they move in and out of their houses.

Constructed directly above 33 kV high-tension underground electricity cables, the drain raises

‘Footpath on MTH Road is unsafe’



T. GUNASEELAN

A section of the footpath on MTH Road in Ambattur, that is from Ambattur police station to Ambattur OT, is unfriendly to pedestrians. The slabs are broken and in some sections it has disappeared



completely. Hence, pedestrians walk on the road which witnesses heavy traffic including MTC buses. Greater Chennai Corporation is requested to do the needful at the earliest.

T. Gunaseelan is a resident of Ambattur

‘Escalators of FOB in Thirumangalam out of order’

NARAYANASAMI DHANDAPANI

It is more than a year since the escalators on the foot overbridge on 100 Feet Jawaharlal Nehru Main Road (near Thirumangalam Police Station) are not functioning. The public finds it quite difficult. This foot overbridge witnesses good patronage because it links Anna Nagar east and west and there are many schools in the vicinity.

Narayanasami Dhandapani is a resident of Anna Nagar

PHOTO: AKHILA EASWARAN



‘Fence this **power transformer**’

UMA SRINIVASAN

An electricity transformer at Muthamman Koil Street in Ayanavaram needs to be fenced. It is near the main gate of Shreyas Apartments. The area surrounding the transformer is littered with alcohol bottles. I request Greater Chennai Corporation to provide an aesthetic view-cutter for this transformer as it has done in various other parts of the city.

Uma Srinivasan is a resident of Ayanavaram

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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.

Periyar Nagar library reopened



After a year-long renovation work by Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, the Full-Time Branch Library on Karthikeyan Road in Periyar Nagar was reopened on November 14. The library sports a new look with a fresh coat of paint, greenery, lamps, upholstery and anti-skid floor. It has air-conditioning.

According to officials, around 100 new visitors have enrolled as members in this library in less than a week since it was reopened.

At present the total members of the library is 17,983 and the number of books is 70,000.

"Regular activities were held for children. During the renovation work they were not conducted. Now those activities will be resumed," says the librarian.

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

The library can be reached at 96001 72868.



The library on Karthikeyan Road at Periyar Nagar.

Koyambedu Aadhaar centre to be shifted

Unique Identification Authority of India-run Aadhaar Seva Kendra centre which was functioning from Ten Square Mall on Jawaharlal Nehru Road in Koyambedu has stopped its operations from November 28. The centre will resume its operations from December 15 from the following address: TNUIFS Towers, First Floor (Left Wing), Block H1, Third Avenue, Anna Nagar - East.

Digital monthly bus passes for MTC commuters

Commuters of Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses can purchase monthly season tickets from Chennai One App, an application of Chennai Unified Metropolitan Authority. It is a digital pass introduced by CUMTA and MTC, says a press release. The facility does away with paperwork and eliminates the need for physical visits to bus termini. A commuter can purchase it anytime from anywhere.

MTC digital pass comes with two options: "Gold" pass priced at ₹1,000 which allows unlimited travel for a month on ordinary, deluxe, and express services. The other is "Diamond" pass priced at ₹2,000 which allows unlimited travel for a month on all MTC buses, including AC services.

How it works

Download the Chennai One app
→ select the pass → click a selfie
→ pay digitally. While boarding the bus, commuters can simply enter the bus OTP or scan the QR code displayed inside the bus to activate the pass and show it to the conductor for every travel.

Introductory offer

Users can avail a flat ₹50 assured cashback when purchasing the bus pass using the BHIM app.

About Chennai One app

It is an integrated commute app launched by CUMTA this September. It allows booking and payment for travel in buses, metro trains, suburban trains, auto rickshaws, and cabs in one digital platform and the travel can be tracked with a single QR. The motto of the app is "One City. One App. One Ticket," add the press release.

Bed linen service for non-AC sleeper class passengers from January 1

The Chennai Division of Southern Railway will be introducing a service wherein bed linen will be provided on an "on-demand, on-payment" basis for passengers of non-AC sleeper class from January 1, 2026.

According to a press release, non-AC sleeper class passengers are not provided with sanitized bed linen during their journey. To address this, the new service is implemented under the New Innovative Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme. Following the overwhelming response a pilot project of the service witnessed, it has been regularised.

The service is provided in three packages: one bedsheet, one pillow and one pillow cover is priced at ₹50; one pillow and one pillow cover is priced at ₹30; and one bed sheet is priced at ₹20. The following are the trains covered under this service: Nilgiri Superfast Express; Mangalore Superfast Express; Mannargudi Express; Tiruchendur Superfast Express; Palghat Express; Silambu Superfast Express; Tambaram-Nagercoil Superfast Express; Trivandrum Superfast Express; Alleppey Superfast Express; and Mangalore Express.

Ambattur Industrial Estate terminus wears a new look



After a year-long renovation work, Metropolitan Transport Corporation's bus terminus at Ambattur Industrial Estate on CTH Road was reopened last week. The renovation was carried out by Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority under North Chennai Development Scheme. Regular commuters appreciate the work and the new amenities. Some commuters voiced the need for the information boards to be in English also as there are a good number of IT companies at the industrial estate and a good number of the employees are from other States. Buses to Velachery, Broadway, Ayapakkam, Poonamallee, Thiruverkaadu, Madhavaram, Redhills and Thirumullaivoyal are operated from this terminus. PHOTOS: AKHILA EASWARAN



Students in a mime show to raise awareness about the issue.

PHOTO: BASHKARAN N

each of the 64 arts and science and B.Ed colleges in Chennai under its jurisdiction has not only formed a club but taken proactive measure to ensure there is maximum reach both inside and outside the classroom.

Some of the institutions have more than one club, established in keeping with the strength of the college. "We get reports from colleges every month and we have a meeting in the Collectorate as well to discuss the activities under Drug Free Tamil Nadu. Due to regular follow-ups, these clubs are active," says K. Sudarkodi, regional joint director, Directorate of Collegiate Education.

Colleges run competitions and activities. The Government gets them to have an essay writing programme and a marathon to create more awareness about the issue.

Asking certain institutions to take up a survey in the neighbourhood with student volunteers to understand the prevalence of narcotics use has been another step in a data-based approach to tackling this issue.

Along with other law enforcement departments such as Greater Chennai City Police and the Excise Department, Chennai is fighting a smart and relentless war to eradicate drugs, say experts.

Anti-trafficking clubs

Involving the youth as allies in this war is a major step.

P.M. Nair, retired Director General of Police, NDRF, who has been working with educational institutions to set up Anti Human Trafficking Clubs, says investing in youth through such clubs is a good practice as they listen, take it forward and will become ambassadors of the initiative.

"We are creating a new generation of people who are aware of national security," says the retired IPS officer and an expert working against human trafficking.

He suggests that the State Government undertake both a qualitative and quantitative study to understand the impact of such clubs in fighting narcotics.

As an extension of the anti-drug clubs in educational institutions, Nair says anti-human trafficking clubs should also be brought into its fold. As per United Nations convention against transnational organised crime, there are three types of organised trafficking – arms, drugs and humans. "Drug menace is a known problem while human trafficking is not as much of a known problem, but both are serious issues affecting youth. We should empower boys and girls on both issues," he says.

The Mizoram model of involving the community to fight drugs is also worth emulating. Here we can involve Panchayats who will spread it at the grassroots level.

One year gone; and it is time to take stock

Shining the spotlight on the clubs in schools and colleges across Chennai that have launched campaigns against drug addiction

LIFFY THOMAS

It is one year since the Tamil Nadu government mandated that educational institutions establish 'anti-drug clubs' and form 'volunteer teams' to create awareness, prevent drug abuse and promote a drug-free lifestyle.

As a result of this, over the last one year in Chennai, schools and colleges have come up with innovative campaign ideas to combat the scourge of drugs.

According to the office of the regional joint director, Directorate of Collegiate Education,

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

When the Tamil Nadu government made it mandatory that every educational institution have an Anti-Drug Club, Stella Matutina College of Education in Ashok Nagar already had an initiative that was aligned with the objectives of government-mandated club. Recently, the college's anti-drug committee received a cash prize of ₹5,000 and secured the third prize at the district level, as part of the Home, Prohibition, and Excise Department's campaign to honour institutions that have significantly contributed to drug-prevention efforts.



Future educators lead fight against drugs

Students at a teachers training college in Ashok Nagar are engaged with 45 schools across Chennai to educate children about drug addiction and its ramifications

The 64-year-old institution offers B.Ed., M.Ed., M. Phil, and Ph.D. programmes and the teachers in the making were aware of the risk of school students getting hooked on drugs.

In 2024, they conducted a survey among school children to un-

derstand how aware they were about drug abuse. The exercise also tested the effectiveness of a structured drug awareness programme designed for school children.

The programme's goal was to identify knowledge gaps in the

Students of Stella Matutina College of Education take the pledge.

drug education being provided at schools.

A total of 108 secondary school students from multiple institutions in Chennai district were covered in this sample survey.

"Some of our recommendations included a uniform programme for all students regardless of gender or region; the need to have a special focus on low-income families and government schools; the importance of using engaging tools such as videos, street plays, posters and digital media," says C. Sasikala, assistant professor, Stella Matutina College of Education and one of the authors of the study, to be published soon on the college's website.

They also recommended parent involvement, especially in vulnerable communities, and the need to allocate dedicated funds for awareness campaigns in schools. Since then, the institution has launched a variety of activities such as mime, skits and rallies at the schools they engage with. "For instance, our second year students have to compulsori-

ly go on an internship with a school, so we made it mandatory that they conduct an event in the assembly for at least a week to let students know why awareness on this topic is important," says Sasikala.

The students pursuing education programmes at the college are currently engaged with 45 schools in Chennai. The teachers in the making also have to present a report on the activities they conducted in the schools.

The institution brings experts to talk to their students and have also invited schools they thought need some hand holding to their campus to offer workshops.

Sr. M. Irudhaya Mary, principal incharge, Stella Matutina College of Education, says the efforts by the institution stand out as they have been consistent. "Two times in a month we conduct a programme, sometimes it extends to three. Once in three months, students take an oath. These are future teachers and getting them to work for the betterment of society is one of the gains from this initiative," says Sr. Mary. She says they collect feedback to measure the success of these initiatives and to see how they can adapt.



A swift trip to **Adyar Estuary**

An Indian swiftlet has put in an appearance at this patch; previous records of the bird from Tamil Nadu have had to do with hilly or mountainous regions

PRINCE FREDERICK

The second look always uncovers more than what the opening gaze did in the first place. On rare occasions, the second look totally upends conclusions made from the initial glance. That is how a bird record from Adyar Estuary on October 26 underwent a revision.

The bird was first believed to be a Dusky Crag Martin, and the photos were squatting in the memory card largely unseen, even less examined. Around a month later, a study of the photos by an eBird reviewer demanded a re-identification of the bird. And as it turned out, what had been seen on the last Sunday of October in 2025 was an altogether different feather, one spiralling into Chennai for the first time. The visitor to the Adyar Estuary that day that was mistaken for a Dusky Crag Martin was actually an Indian edible nest swiftlet (*Aerodramus unicolor*), also known as the Indian swiftlet. The bird was photographed by Saravana Manian, the sighting taking place in the company of a clutch of other birders.

Saravana Manian points out that Adyar Estuary is an unlikely terrain for the Indian swiftlet. He elaborates: "Previous records of the Indian swiftlet from Tamil Nadu have been from hilly or mountainous patches – Palani Hills, Kodaikanal, Sirumalai and the Coimbatore and Kanyakumari



An Indian swiftlet photographed by birder Saravana Manian at Adyar Estuary on October 26, 2025.

ranges of the Western Ghats. The bird is also found in Sri Lanka."

The species is also known to be found in buildings abandoned for a long time. Habitats fitting these descriptions are a far cry from what exists in and around the Adyar Estuary, which makes this sighting baffling. From the viewpoint of probability, the unlikelihood of an Indian swiftlet "vacationing" around the broken bridge in the Adyar Estuary might be of astronomical proportions. In life, all sorts of unexpected events happen

and might come across as mysterious at first glance. With diligent study, the mystery behind such events could collapse, and be seen for what they are – the less-known extension of the natural. As in life, so in birding.

In this species, the male is the nest builder. And the nest is in the form of a cup, and it is licked into shape by the male bird using its saliva. In certain parts, these cups go into the making of gastronomic delicacies, earning the bird its name, Indian edible nest swiftlet.

An evening of soulful compositions



As part of the Margazhi Music Festival at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, M. S. Martin and his disciples presented a Carnatic keyboard concert on November 23.

The concert showcased both tradition and innovation and how the instrument can capture the nuance and discipline of Carnatic music.

Carnatic music on the keyboard demands extraordinary precision. The students: Padmanabhan on mridangam, Vaidvelu on tabla and Hariharan Babu on rhythm pad, trained under Martin, rose to this challenge gracefully, offering the au-

dience an evening that celebrated classical purity through a modern sonic palette, a release said. The evening featured several classical masterpieces, including 'Parathpara Parameshwara', 'Aadamodi Galada', and 'Kamalaptagula'.

A technically demanding highlight of the evening was 'Mari Mari Ninne', which the ensemble performed with notable maturity.

To celebrate the spirit of the season, the performers presented 'Margazhi Thingal Allava'. The concert concluded with a 'Sindhu Bhairavi Thillana', executed with precision, the release added.

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Registrations open for Super Chennai Quiz 2025

Super Chennai, the citizen-driven city branding movement, has opened registrations for the first edition of the Super Chennai Quiz 2025, set to take place on December 7, 2025, at the Lady Andal School Auditorium.

Led by quizmaster and Nawab of Arcot, Asif Ali, the event promises to bring together students, families and professionals for a celebration of knowledge, culture and city's spirit, says a press release.

Participants from schools, colleges

and the general public can register and showcase their intellect and passion for all things Chennai. Registered participants will receive entry passes, quiz materials and Super Chennai merchandise on the day of the event.

Registration is priced at ₹199, and winners will receive prizes worth ₹1 lakh, recognising their knowledge, enthusiasm and love for the city.

To nominate or register for the Super Chennai Quiz 2025, visit www.superchennai.com or write to hello@superchennai.com for details.



The nursery at Guindy. PHOTOS: R RAVINDRAN

Horticulture department sets up nursery in Guindy

Tamil Nadu Horticulture Development Agency, a wing of the Department of Horticulture & Plantation Crops, has set up a nursery in Guindy, near the railway station.

According to officials, it was inaugurated during the first week of November. Here, ornamental plants including indoor ones, saplings of trees, seeds, ma-

nure including vermi-compost, and pots are sold. This sales outlet is in addition to the ones at Madhavaram and Teynampet (Semmozhi Poonga), add officials.

The nursery functions on all days of a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For details, call 98400 72385 / 99402 45997.

Music concert

As part of 'Karthigai Ekadashi', Uma Kumar, a Carnatic singer from Switzerland, will perform an 'Abhang Mela', a music concert on November 30 at Kamakoti Hall, Krishna Gana Sabha, at 6 p.m..

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CMWSSB

1916/ 044-4567 4567: Besides these two dedicated numbers, CMWSSB's encourages public to share their grievances through WhatsApp 8144930308 - CMWSSB.



A rainy day. FILE PHOTO: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

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Nominations open for Alert Being Award

Alert, a voluntary non-profit organisation that empowers a common man to act in case of emergency and save lives, has invited nominations for the 9th edition of ALERT Being Award. The annual event honours individuals and organisations, and nominations are open from across India. The shortlisted awardees will be honoured at the Alert Being Awards ceremony scheduled in February 2026.

The awards will be presented in different categories: Individual, Organization, Individual - Going Beyond Call of Duty and Organisation - Social Venture. ALERT also confers

icon and lifetime achievement awards to individuals or organisations who have created impact at scale and have served humanity their entire life. This year the awards will be presented to 10 Good Samaritans nationally who have saved lives during emergencies, said a release.

Registration Link: www.aba.alert.ngo

Last date for submitting nominations: December 20, 2025

For more information, contact: 9941527838 or write to alertbeingawards@alert.ngo

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Thanigai Estates Celebrates 37th Anniversary Successfully



The 37th anniversary celebrations of Thanigai Estates, along with the Outstanding Employees Award Ceremony and the launch of the new 'Puttur Prime' housing plot project, were conducted with great enthusiasm and grandeur at the ICF Ambedkar Auditorium. The event was graced by the Founder of Thanigai Estates, Dr. MJF Lion S. Kilivilavan, along with distinguished guests including Mr. Jayaseelan (IDAS), Indian Defence Accounts Service, actor and poet Mr. Snehana, KPY fame Mr. Naveen, Ms. RJ Ananthi, and several social media influencers. The encouraging wishes and active participation of the guests added prestige to the event. Special awards were presented to dedicated employees and marketers who contributed significantly to the growth of the company. Furthermore, the announcement and inauguration of the newly introduced Puttur Prime housing plot project took place during the event, receiving an overwhelming response from the public and the dignitaries present. The management of Thanigai Estates extended heartfelt thanks to all valued marketers, staff members, special guests, and media friends for their support in making the event a grand success.