

## 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 FARM AT THE SCHOOL

Ahead of International Plant Health Day (May 12), a look at how an institution in Chennai has set a template for teaching regenerative farming practices to students **P5**



### A CITY WHERE AIR CONDITIONERS TAKE A BATTERING

Its coastal location makes Chennai attractive, but there is a flip side to it: salty air and high humidity, factors that are not friendly to air-conditioners. **P6**



## THEN AND NOW

# Prakasam Street: how it shrugged off squalor

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**Y**ou cannot miss that spot in Prakasam Street in T. Nagar. It has a massive CMWSSB water tank filling up the sky in the background. Around a year ago, there was another reason this spot could not be missed. Garbage dumping more outside the bins than inside them.

Located diametrically opposite Prakasam First Street, this patch on Prakasam Street would attract those who wanted to offload construction debris clandestinely.

The spot now presents a picture that contrasts sharply with what prevailed. A garden with fencing marks the space along the compound wall of the CMWSSB water filling facility. There is literally no room for garbage dumping. Sporting paintings, the compound wall also offers something to take in.

The five bins have also been shifted out of that patch. In addition,



Prakasam Street on December 29, 2023; and (below) on May 9, 2025. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

In 'Then and Now' we feature roads that have fallen from grace as well as those that have improved considerably

tion, outside the compound wall (which lines a good part of Prakasam Street), vehicles, many of them heavy vehicles would be parked. The fenced garden has put an end to that. The images were taken on May 9, 2025. Earlier, through pictures of the spot taken on Decem-

ber 29, 2023, *The Hindu Downtown* had highlighted the squalor that marked the patch.

Back then, the patch was seen through the framework of the Broken Window Theory: how a seeming lack of initiative to check garbage dumping outside the five bins placed there then was encouraging the behavior.

Photos: Prince Frederick

## READERS WRITE

### 'Increase the display screen's font size'



P. SATHYANARAYANAN

At Chennai Metro Rail stations across the city, the font size of the display screen at the entry and exit gates is not friendly to senior citizens. I am referring to the screen that displays the remaining amount when entering the terminal and the balance after a journey. I am a senior citizen and have difficulty seeing the letters on the screen.

Commuters, especially senior citizens, have to ask the staff at the

ticket counters for the remaining balance every time.

We have to wait in line at busy stations for a long time. If there is no sufficient balance, the wait is reasonable. We can either charge or top up the card.

I have made complaints in this regard to the CMRL staff, who said they would look into this issue and rectify it.

P. Sathyanarayanan is a social activist, a resident of Guindy, and a member of the Senior Citizens' Forum in Chennai.



### Textile outlet opened at Central railway station

The Commercial Branch of Chennai Division, Southern Railways has opened a sales outlet of a private textile manufacturer at Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Railway Station

on May 9. According to a press release, it is an effort to enhance revenue generation by utilising the premises of the railways. The textile showroom, located at the new concourse area of the station, has a five year licence.

K. Beji George, Principal Chief Commercial Manager and other railway officials took part in the inauguration of the store, the press release adds.



## READERS WRITE

11G bus service to  
Iyyappanthangal  
is now 11M

The 11G bus service (Broadway - Iyyappanthangal) has been renamed 11M, reportedly, to differentiate it from another 11G service (Broadway - K.K. Nagar).

Both the services follow the same route between Broadway and K.K. Nagar and after that one heads to Iyyappanthangal.

"The 11G to Iyyappanthangal was given a name change, as commuters seeking that service but boarding the other one (the one bound for KK Nagar) is common," says an MTC source.

Ramapuram RWA seeks **small bus service** to Guindy

**R**amapuram Makkal Nala Urimai Sangam, a residents welfare association in Ramapuram, gave a representation to the Maduravoyal MLA, K. Ganapathy last week seeking Metropolitan Transport Corporation's small bus service to Guindy.

In the representation dated May 5, 2025, the Association points out the frequency of the existing regular bus service 18E (Ramapuram-Broadway via Guindy) is poor and hence residents go to the DLF bus stop on Mount Poonamallee High Road to access buses to Guindy.

"The 18E service starts from Kambar Salai and covers the main roads - Bharathi Salai and Valluvar Salai. In other words, a good

part of Ramapuram is covered. But its frequency is three trips per day which is very poor. Given the number of residents relying on public transport, the frequency should be increased," says K. Subramanian, the association's president.

The representation insists Guindy because buses to Kilambakkam are available in good frequency. "There is no service to Kilambakkam covering Ramapuram bus-stop on Mount Poonamallee High Road. Hence we are seeking a service to Guindy. It would be convenient if the service is provided to the Race Course bus terminus as the metro railway station and sub-urban railway station are located here," adds Subramanian.

Text by L. Kanthimathi

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**volunteer-writer**

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Citizens' group helps  
underprivileged children  
**open SB account in post office**

Federation of Residential Welfare Associations, West Jhafferkhanpet, made 30 students of a Greater Chennai Corporation - run school at R.V. Nagar opens a savings bank account at Ashok Nagar Post Office as part of its community welfare initiative.

"The federation provided a sum of ₹500 to each student. This is the second year of this social initiative. It was 60 students last year. The aim of this initiative is to teach underprivileged children the importance of savings," says the federation's secretary, P. Sudhakar.

A post box was set up at Sapthagiri Colony in January last year, a result of the concerted efforts of the federation.

## A board stirs up a debate



Some residents of Srinagar Colony in Saidapet are peeved to see such boards hung at different locations in the locality. Put up by the Srinagar Colony Welfare Association, it requests people to avoid feeding strays in the locality. A dog lover who shared this picture says this is ridiculous when the colony has dozens of cows and goats roaming freely.

CUMTA celebrates **Tamil Week**

As part of Tamil Week celebration, Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) conducted various competitions for its staff last week. According to a press release, the event was held with the support of the Department of Tamil Development & Information. The competitions included: essay writing, quiz, oratory, and storytelling. The Special Officer of CUMTA, I. Jayakumar, honoured the winners with prizes and certificates.

The press release notes the



event was organized following the Chief Minister's announcement on April 22 at the Legislative Assembly that Tamil Week will be celebrated

from April 29 to May 5 in honour of the Tamil poet and writer Pavendar Bharathidasan who was born on April 29.

**Culinary workshop**

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre, Guindy, is conducting a culinary workshop on May 15.

The session will focus on cuisines made from millets which include: foxtail millet, finger millet, pearl millet, and barnyard millet. The workshop will focus on sweets,

savouries and tea-time meals such as idli, dosai, puttu, adai, upma, and kozhukattai, says a press release.

Another workshop on mushroom cultivation will be held on May 16. Both the sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. For registration and other details, call 044 - 29530048.



# Building dreams in TT

Raman TT High Performance Centre in Chetpet organised an awards function

K. KEERTHIVASAN

**F**or four-time National champion and 2000 Sydney Olympian S. Raman, there has never been half measures. Any task must be done with complete dedication and devotion.

As a player and coach, he has always followed these principles. As a coach, Raman's dream is to win an Olympic medal through his best ward, G. Sathiyam.

A true disciple, the 32-year-old Asian and Commonwealth Games medallist, has been working doubly hard towards the dream.

Their target is to win a medal at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Raman said with the help of Tamil Nadu Table Tennis Association (TNTTA) and its conduct of State-



ranking tournaments with high prize money, Tamil Nadu can produce players of the calibre of Sathiyam and Amalraj, who are among Raman's high-profile trainees.

Speaking at his Academy's (Raman TT High Performance Centre in Chetpet) awards evening recently, the 55-year-old Dronacharya Awardee said, "The high prize money given by Tamil Nadu Table Tennis Association (TNTTA) should inspire the players and their pa-

rents and the entire ecosystem to believe table tennis can be taken as a profession."

Raman said out of eight medals won by Tamil Nadu paddlers in the 38th National Games held in Uttarakhand early this year, five are from his Centre.

Sanjay Madhavan, CEO of Infonovum, was the chief guest while A. V. Vidyasagar, secretary of TNTTA was the guest of honour. Amalraj was also present.

The award winners at the Raman TT High Performance Centre, with the chief guest, in Chetpet, recently.

## The awardees:

**G. Sathiyam:** National Games: Gold in men's doubles and silver in men's singles and bronze in men's team.

**Amalraj:** National Games: Gold in men's doubles and bronze in men's team event.

**S. Preyesh:** Senior National Championships: gold in men's doubles; National Games: silver in men's doubles and bronze in men's team.

**S. Tharun:** National Games: bronze in men's team.

**S. Selena Deepti:** National Games: gold in women's singles, and bronze in women's doubles of the Senior National Championships.

## Special buses for Chithirai Pournami



In view of 'Chithirai Pournami', Tamil Nadu State Express Transport Corporation is operating special buses to the pilgrimage town of Tiruvannamalai on May 11 and 12.

The Corporation will operate around 1,156 buses on May 11 and 966 buses on May 12 from a bus terminus at Kilambakkam.

Close to 300 buses will operate from Madhavaram. Forty air-conditioned buses (with bed and seating facilities) will ply on these two days from Kilambakkam.

The passengers can book tickets through [www.tnstatestc.in](http://www.tnstatestc.in) and the mobile app.

## A plane trip, resort experience for 10 young cancer survivors

Vaan Ulaa, an initiative by the Thenmozhi Memorial Trust, gave ten young cancer survivors from underprivileged backgrounds a chance to fly for the very first time. On April 26, 2025, the children boarded a flight from Chennai to Bangalore, opening up a new chapter filled with joy, courage, and hope.

The send-off was attended by actor Samuthirakani, actress Sai Dhanshika, and television host Archana Chandhoke, who also accompanied the children during the journey. Actor Mime Gopi, ambassador of the Trust, joined them as well, offering support and encouragement, says a press release.

After landing in Bangalore, the children were taken to a resort where they



spent the night. For many, it was their first time enjoying simple pleasures—playing outdoor games, trying swimming, and spending time away from hospitals. It was a chance to relax, have fun, and build new friendships in a safe and happy environment, the release says.

On April 27, the group flew back to

Chennai, their hearts full of new experiences. "I felt like a bird above the clouds," said Nashiek, a nine-year old boy. "I stepped into a swimming pool for the first time," shared Keerthika S, who is 12 years old, the release adds.

"Vaan Ulaa is not just about travel, it's about rebuilding confidence and showing these children that their dreams can take flight," said Arun Kumar M, founder of the Trust, which was started in memory of his mother, Thenmozhi.

The Trust has impacted over 10,000 lives and plans to make Vaan Ulaa an annual event, with future programmes focusing on mentoring and holistic support for young survivors, says the release.

## Two-day furniture expo

A home furniture expo is being held at Chennai Trade Centre in Nandambakkam on May 11 and 12; 10.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. One can exchange old furniture for new at the expo. Interested customers can take photos of their used furniture and show them to the organisers at the expo, said a press release. Latest trends in home décor, living room sets, bedroom furniture, wallpapers, fashion products, health and beauty products, cosmetics, kitchen accessories and consumer durables are on display. One can avail a discount of 50 percent on all furniture, added the release. For details, call 95661 87502, 93913 91162.

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In 'Then and Now' we feature roads that have fallen from grace as well as those that have improved considerably

# Link Road back to wearing 'grubby rags'

There were ostentatious efforts to give Link Road a new look. And it managed to receive a makeover; but now all the good work seems to have been undone

## THEN AND NOW

PRINCE FREDERICK

**L**ink Road, the one connecting Ethiraj Salai in Egmore and Dams Road in Anna Salai was a synonym for grubbiness.

The road would attract discards quietly deposited under cover of darkness. It would sport unseemly heaps of debris.

Then Greater Chennai Corporation seemed to have penned a new script for Link Road. The road received a scrub, one that looked almost thoroughgoing. It was also gifted a new pavement on the side where it matches strides with Cooum. Saplings of multiple species adorned this pavement.

As it has turned out, the script is truncated, and Link Road has gone back to being squalid all over again.

Images of the road taken on May 7 and 8 present tell-tale signs of neglect by Greater Chennai Corporation.

The weeds have "smothered" the saplings

and threaten to carry the pavement captive. The road is back to entertaining discards.

A huge slather of food waste was lying on the pavement giving off a nauseating smell, one that could knock a corpse dead many times over.

A stray dog had waded into a pile of discarded upholstery and found an unlikely snack. Its face lodged entirely in a plastic cover, the was licking clean, the leftover in the cover.

When Link Road presented a cleaner version of itself, there was a sneaking thought that it might witness the revival of an old initiative.

Many summers ago, this road was designated as a vending zone, with shops being marked on the compound wall on the other side (the one opposite the Cooum side).

But the vendors would have none of it. Link Road was not in people's regular commuting route. Nor was it a stretch fitness-walkers took to. The road was not part of any residential patch.

The floating population the road entertained had to do with motorists who took the road to beat the traffic on Anna Salai.

When Link Road had been spruced up which was over a year ago, possibilities abounded.

An attempt could have been made to revive the old idea of a vending zone, provided enough was done to ensure greater footfall.

Enhancing it aesthetically, the road could have been turned into a health track, thereby ensuring a steady flow of people who could serve as customers to roadside shops.

Given GCC's reluctance to honour the road with a consistent maintenance log for it, these possibilities stay on as possibilities that are unlikely to be realised.

The rot did not set in suddenly: close to a year ago, *The Hindu Downtown* warned of weeds growing around some of the newly planted saplings, illustrating the neglect of saplings with an image from June 27, 2024.

The weeds having gained the upper hand, the useful plants seem to be growing around them.

And what seemed a lost synonym for grubbiness and apathy has been reclaimed, unfortunately.



Pictures from May 7 and 8, 2025 show the degradation that the road has undergone; a lone image from June 27, 2024 shows the road in a better light.

PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK





Ahead of International Plant Health Day (May 12), a look at how an institution in Chennai has set a template for teaching regenerative farming practices to students

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

**A**t APL Global School in Thoraipakkam, the classroom “extends” into the garden with a gardening initiative having travelled swiftly from the periphery of learning to the centre stage.

In 2017, it sprouted as a club initiative by Maya Ganesh, a multi-hyphenate with regenerative farming as one of her specialisations, and soon put out promising shoots that developed into study branches. The initiative now stands robust as a full-fledged regenerative gardening curriculum that reaches students of every grade in tailored and measured forms.

“We do not have traditional landscaping here,” says Shalini N, architect and garden coordinator at APL. “Instead, we have turned our open spaces into edible landscapes. Every plant is chosen not for beauty, but for its utility and ecological value.”

Ahead of International Plant Health Day (May 12), this initiative can serve as a reminder that ensuring plant health is ensuring human health and planet health.

### The genesis

“It began as a club,” recalls founder Gita Jagannathan, “but with Maya’s vision and dedication, it soon evolved into a structured part of our curriculum. Environmental education is central to our ethos. We see farming not as an extracurricular activity but as a means to understand the self, society and the environment.”

The regenerative gardening curriculum is multi-tiered to suit different learning stages.

Kindergartners take “Garden Walks,” exploring biodiversity in age-appropriate language.

Primary students get five to six annual sessions in organic farming.

Middle and senior school students can opt for deeper regenerative agriculture modules through the unique subject “Expressions”.

### Seed by seed

A live seed bank is central to APL’s



## A farm at the school



A tour of the farming activities at APL Global. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

regenerative agriculture initiative. Started after the pandemic, the bank preserves open-pollinated and heirloom seed varieties. “We never use hybrid seeds. Our seeds come from regenerative farmers across India – from Yarowway

Farm, Hooga Seeds, and Sahaja Seeds,” explains Shalini, who came on board in 2020 and now nurtures what was started and perfected by Maya ever since the latter moved out of Chennai.

Each seed undergoes a cycle of



seeds in our bank were saved by our special education students,” says Shalini. The tactile and repetitive nature of seed sorting helps them build focus, motor skills, and a sense of accomplishment. Their labels – often handwritten – now mark jars filled with red pumpkin, beans, ridge gourd and more.

The garden also doubles as a living lab. Biology students observe plant anatomy first-hand. Photography Club captures dew-drenched greens. Global Perspectives classes use composting to teach sustainability. Pencil shavings, once discarded, now become compost experiments. The soil, like the curriculum, is always alive.

The seed bank is also inclusive in access, not just in participation. Any teacher, parent or student who wants to start a home garden can take seeds freely. “All we ask is that they send back a few seeds if their crop grows well,” says Shalini. “That way the cycle continues.”

### Harvest days

The School Garden Produce Sale is a small yet vibrant initiative that functions much like a mini-marketplace, exclusively within the school campus. Held on alternate Fridays, this event is designed to share the seasonal bounty of the school’s garden with the school community, while subtly promoting sustainability, healthy eating and awareness about farm-to-table concepts.

Each cycle begins with a harvest day, typically managed by the garden team. A list of fresh items – ranging from herbs, greens, and vegetables to the occasional processed product like turmeric powder – is compiled and circulated via email to the teachers. “The response is always overwhelming,” says Shalini. “The produce sells out in ten minutes,” says Shalini. “Prices are nominal – ₹10 to ₹45.”

APL’s commitment to regenerative farming practices is spilling over beyond its campus. “We have submitted a proposal to the Tamil Nadu education department,” says Gita, “suggesting that every school in the state have a farming space – just like rainwater harvesting was once mandated.”

The team is also ready to assist other institutions. “We offer support for design, seed sourcing, and setup,” says Shalini. “We are open to workshops too, if there is interest.”

growing, harvesting, cleaning, drying and testing. Students are involved in each step, says Shalini.

“After saving seeds, we test them ourselves before sharing. Once, we sourced white bitter gourd seeds. The expected yield was large fruit – but we got smaller, low-yield ones. That trial helped us assess and improve seed quality.”

Seeds are not just stored – they are shared. With teachers, students, and even farmers across India through informal networks and WhatsApp groups. Some teachers now grow terrace gardens using seeds from the seed bank.

### An inclusive mindset

The programme is inclined towards inclusion. It is also multi-disciplinary in its approach.

The Kamalam Division, created for neurodivergent students, not only includes them but also celebrates them in the gardening ecosystem.

“These students have shown a deep affinity for seed saving,” says Maya. “It is meditative, sensory, and calming – making it an effective therapeutic tool. This year, many



# A city where air conditioners take a battering

Its coastal location makes Chennai attractive, but there is a flip side to it: salty air and high humidity, factors that are not friendly to air-conditioners

LIFFY THOMAS

A family living at an independent house in MRC Nagar is feeling the heat, ironically on account of an air-conditioner. Five years old, it has stopped working and is unserviceable. Buy a new one or replace the outdoor unit – the service company has told the family.

Not a peculiar case in Chennai: the city's high humidity and salty air from the long coastline take a toll on ACs faster. In localities close to sewage treatment plants and the Cooum, copper pipes in the indoor AC unit are hugely corrosion-prone. Weakened copper components lead to leakage of gas and reduced efficiency of the AC unit. Many residents have been told by service technicians that fumes coming from sewage released from pumping stations lead to wear and tear of components.

Last summer, D. Bhuvanesh from Telephone Nagar in Perungudi invested in an AC that came with a five-year warranty. "That was a calculated decision as we were spending a lot on repairing ACs as they are vulnerable to corrosion in our area. Sometimes each service would cost me ₹3,000 and once to change the coil we had to shell out ₹8,000," says Bhuvanesh.

An average split AC is built to last for 10 to 15 years but that is changing. The Central Government is also working on schemes to nudge consumers to replace old ACs with new five star models that are more energy-efficient.

Ashwin Kumar, director, Techno Air Conditioners, says five to seven years is a decent lifespan for a residential AC unit in

Chennai if it has functioned without much of a hiccup.

He says saltwater is one big enemy for copper coils that are a key component in the outdoor unit of AC, making them more susceptible to damage from corrosion.

"What the motherboard is to the computer, the compressor is to the AC. It plays a direct and indirect role on the unit's performance. The type of gas that we are feeding into the compressor also plays a role. So when the compressor is overloaded the cooling coil is also impacted," says Ashwin.

## Energy efficiency

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency recommends that all air-conditioned brands set their default temperature at 24 degree Celsius to ensure saving on electricity and to reduce carbon footprint.

"For the last two years, most of the major AC brands come with an inbuilt sticker in the indoor unit that states that 24 degree Celsius is the ambient temperature to be maintained, but more awareness about this feature needs to be created both by retail outlets and technicians," says Ashwin.

He says technicians have tools to check whether the flow of gas is happening, if the pumping system is working and whether the required fan speed is maintained.

For offices and commercial establishments where the capacity is between 50 and 100 tonnes, it pays to have a dedicated technician to handle the remote control or the central AC switch as frequent temperature adjustments can affect its lifespan, says Ashwin.

## Can Chennai take lessons from this model?

BSES Yamuna Power Ltd. (BYPL), a joint venture between Reliance Infrastructure Limited and the Government of Delhi, runs an AC replacement scheme with leading air conditioner manufacturers such as Havells, Godrej, Blue Star, LG, Voltas and O'General on board.

Open for residents of East and Central Delhi, the scheme encourages consumers to exchange their old ACs for new energy-efficient 5-star rated ACs at a discount of 60%.

The objectives of the scheme include reduction in the summer peak load of BYPL, flattening of load curve and phasing out inefficient non-star rated ACs and increasing the adoption of BEE 5-star rated ACs, says a note on the website <https://www.bsedelhi.com>.

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Bureau of Energy Efficiency partners with Tangedco to nudge consumers to set their default AC temperature at 24 degree Celsius

## The magic number

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The next time you are operating an air conditioner remote look for the magic number 24 and make sure to have it as default setting. To nudge households and businesses to reduce power consumption and carbon emission, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Union Minister of Power, has launched a campaign to encourage people to use their ACs at a default setting of 24 degree Celsius.

In South India, Chennai is one of the key cities where this awareness drives will take off with the support of Tangedco as its nodal agency.

"We started the campaign through various methods and will soon extend it with the help of Tangedco, where they will hold meetings with various stakeholders including manufacturers and dealers involved in this segment to raise awareness," says

Chandra Shekhara Reddy, media advisor southern states/ UTs, BEE.

With 1.35 crore consumer base, Chennai is one of the largest in South India and therefore BEE is keen on having this drive in this city.

"With temperature increasing, demand for power is also rising and with Chennai's hot weather this drive is important to protect the environment as well," says Reddy.

According to BEE estimates, increasing the AC temperature by just 1°C can reduce electricity usage by up to 6%. If ACs are set at 24°C nationwide there would be up to 20 billion units of electricity that can be saved annually and carbon emissions could drop by 8.2 million tonnes per year.



The section of Great Salt Lake in Kalavakkam on OMR is relatively under-birded; here is fresh reason for birders to be regular in visiting this patch, particularly during the migratory season



## WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY (MAY 10)

# A hat trick

PRINCE FREDERICK

Sample these scenarios where the least expected – or the unthought – happens against a fast-ticking clock, ushering in fresh joy.

A result-altering three back-to-back goals in the additional moments of a football match. Three sixes in a row in the final over of a 20-20 tipping the scale. Or, three less-seen migratory birds sighted on the same day within inches of each other, at the tail-end of a wintering season.

Sathish Kumar, an IT professional during the week and a birder during the weekend, experienced the very last scenario.

His jaw dropped during a birding trip to Great Salt Lake (GSL) last weekend and it is yet to snap back to its normal position.

On May 3, 2025, at the salt pans in GSL opposite SSN College in Kalavakkam, Sathish saw a Gull-billed tern, a Slender-billed gull and a Spotted redshank.

He has photographed all three with the Slender-billed gull and the



A Slender billed gull; a Spotted redshank and a Gull billed tern at Great Salt Lake opposite SSN College in Kalavakkam on Rajiv Gandhi Salai on May 3, 2025.

PHOTOS: SATHISH KUMAR

Spotted redshank even filling one frame. Sathish Kumar considers the sighting of the Spotted redshank extraordinary. It was a 'lifer' to him. In birding terms, a lifer marks the first time someone sees a particular bird species in the field.

The Spotted redshank and Com-

mon redshank have more similarities than dissimilarities, but the latter are sufficiently pronounced for a birder to not confuse one for the other.

When Sathish saw the lone Spotted redshank, there were a few Common redshanks in the waters too.

The Spotted redshank he spotted on May 3 had slipped into its breeding plumage.

In its breeding plumage, from crown to belly, including the nape and throat, the Spotted redshank develops a deep dark grey. Its legs also replace red with dark grey.

One of the diagnostic features distinguishing it from the Common redshank (also a winter visitor in these parts): the colour and the shape of the beak.

In the Common redshank, the beak is shorter, and the black and the red are distributed uniformly between the upper and lower mandibles. The base of the beak is red and the tip, black. In the Spotted redshank, the beak is longer, thinner and the tip sharper, and the lower mandible has a touch of red at the base. The rest of the lower mandible and the whole of the upper mandible are black.

Another feature of the Spotted redshank is the slight curve to the beak.

## Inviting students to make a video of a lake

Chitlapakkam Rising, a citizens guardians group, is inviting students to make a video to tell a story titled "Our Lake – Our Pride."

They video should capture the beauty of Chitlapakkam Lake in three to six minutes and be uploaded on social media with the tag #SavingChitlapakkam-

Lake and #MakingChitlapakkamBetter

There will be prizes for both the school and college students, said a release. The last date to submit entries is May 25.

Each contestant can submit multiple versions. For details, call Sunil Jayaram at 95001 22151.

## Zoo ambassador camp

The Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur will conduct its yearly 'Zoo Ambassador Camp 2025' for students of Classes V and above in five batches in May and June.

The camp will be held on these days – May 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 and 31; and June 4 and 5. Online registration is mandatory.

Parents are requested to arrange transport for their children and provide them with water bottles, snacks and fresh-cut fruits. For more details, log on to <https://aazp.in/summercamp2025/>

## New schedule for AC trains

The Southern Railway, Chennai Division, has revised the air-conditioned electrical train services pattern and introduced additional services.

Train No: 49001, Tambaram to Chengalpattu, departs at 06.50 a.m. and arrives at 07.35 a.m. It runs on all days except Sundays and stops at Perungalathur, Guduvancherry, Potheri, Singaperumal Kovil and Paranur.

Train No: 49002, Chengalpattu to Chennai Beach departs at 07.50 a.m., and arrives at 09.25 a.m.. It runs on all days except Sundays and will halt at Paranur, Singaperumal Kovil, Potheri, Guduvancherry, Perungalathur, Tambaram, Chromepet, Tirusulam, Saint Thomas Mount, Guindy, Mambalam, Chennai Egmore, Chennai Park and Chennai Fort.

Train No: 49003 will depart Chennai Beach at 09.41 a.m. and reach Tambaram at 10.36 a.m. It runs on all days except Sundays and stops at all stations.

Train No: 49004 will depart from Tambaram at 1 p.m. and reach Chennai Beach at 1.55 p.m. It will run on all days except Saturdays and halt at all stations.

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