

TAMBARAM

Chromepet » Pallavaram » Tambaram West » Rajakilpakkam » Mannivakkam » Guindy » Keelkattalai » Nanganallur » Guduvanchery » Hasthinapuram » Pammal » Tambaram East
Medavakkam » Srinivasa Nagar » Kathipara Junction » Kovilambakkam » Sadasivam Nagar » Potheri » Selaiyur » Sembakkam » St.Thomas Mount » Madipakkam » Urappakkam » Paranur

'When will the civic body lay roads in Mappedu?'

MERALINE SELVARAJ

Residents of JP Avenue in Mappedu dread the North East monsoon as they equate it with waist-high water, water gushing through the road like tributaries of a river and treacherous puddles that make commuting not only uncomfortable, but highly risky.

Despite repeated requests to the Agaramthen Village Panchayat to lay

the roads, no action has been taken yet. The Panchayat officials have abandoned the area, forcing us to face hardships every monsoon.

Taking safety into account during the rains, residents laid a temporary kuccha road. While this may not be a permanent solution, it provides much-needed relief and highlights the urgent need for proper roads in the area.

Meraline Selvaraj is a resident of JP Avenue, Mappedu



Residents have resorted to taking desperate measures to give roads the semblance of a surface

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'Remove water hyacinth before the rains'

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Members of People's Awareness Association in Chromepet have submitted a memorandum to the Water Resources Department (WRD) and the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation to clear Nemilichery Eri of water hyacinth.

The lake's boundaries are littered with trash.

V. Santhanam, the association founder, says that in 2018, the Federation of Civic and Welfare Associations of Pallavapuram Municipality initiated the removal of garbage.

Years later, the Association and the Federation members and office-bearers restored the lake and formed bonds by pooling in funds from people.

With copious rains, the 2021 North East Monsoon recharged the groundwater table in Nemilichery, Hasthinapuram, Old Pallavaram and Chromepet, says Santhanam.

The lake now resembles a cesspool of sewage. The WRD should have maintained the lake after the restoration, adds Santhanam.

"When we took up the lake issue



Tambaram City Municipal Corporation uses motors to drain sewage.

PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

(also Veeraraghavan Eri and Keezhkattalai Eri) with the civic body, months ago, we were told that funds had been sanctioned to restore lakes, but there is no sight of restoration work."

'Clear encroachments on rainwater canal'

Residents of Chromepet (East) have requested the Water Resources Department and the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation to remove structures on a rainwater canal.

Krishna Nagar residents want

the structures to be removed from the canal on Manickam Street.

R. Kannan, a resident, says that residents have put up cattle sheds over the network, and the cattle and shed waste are not disposed of properly, often being dumped into the canal.

"The dumped waste hinders the water flow in the canal, resulting in water stagnation during rains. This has resulted in a foul smell, breeding of mosquitoes, and the spread of vector-borne diseases, says Kannan. "I have represented this issue to the health department in the Zo-

nal office. But no action has been taken to date."

The canal from Madras Institute of Technology (MIT), running along Rajendra Prasad Road and Manickam Street, connects Nemilichery Eri.

'Sembakkam Lake is dying a slow death'

M. Ravi, secretary of the Sri Sarvamangala Nagar Association, Chitlapakkam, want authorities to take note of the increasing pollution in Sembakkam Lake. The Pachai Malai water channel to the lake is con-

taminated with sewage from manholes on Thiru Vi Ka Nagar's Manimegalai Street and Vino Bhaji Nagar's 11th Street, Hasthinapuram. Ravi says that due to blockages in the drainage system, sewage overflows onto the streets, causing inconvenience to the residents. "The Tambaram City Municipal Corporation uses pipes and motors to drain sewage into the channel." It is learnt that the network does not have a proper pumping station. The network was constructed when the area came under the Pallavapuram Municipality.

READERS WRITE



'Missing' pavements at Brindavan Nagar

On Brindavan Nagar Main Road in Adambakkam, pavements are inscrutable. Motorcycles are parked on the pavements; vendors occupy the remaining space.

Pedestrians are forced to share space with vehicle users, including Metropolitan Transport Corporation buses that ply on this road.

I request Zone 12 of Greater Chennai Corporation to construct high pavements with bollards to prevent vehicular parking and regulate vendors.

A. Samuel is a resident of Adambakkam.

'Vacant plots in Kovilambakkam are poorly maintained'

This image captures a vacant residential plot in Muthaiya Nagar, Kovilambakkam. Before the owners constructed walls, the plot was used as a dumping ground. Now, it has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and reptiles. This plot is not isolated; there are many others in this neighbourhood that are similarly overrun with weeds.

I request the Kovilambakkam Village Panchayat officials to inspect the plots and take appropriate action.

P. Paneerselvam is a resident of Muthaiya Nagar.



'Complete the work on Bypass Road'



R. V. BASKARAN.

The delay in the formation of the Tambaram East Bypass Road, at New Perungalathur and Rajakilpakkam, is causing immense traffic congestion on GST Road and Velachery Main Road between Tambaram and Perungalathur, as well as Velachery.

In New Perungalathur, Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation has relocated its electrical installations and offices, paving the way for the formation of a

one-kilometre stretch.

At Rajakilpakkam, encroachments near Dr. Ambedkar Nagar signal have been removed. A flyover across the lake should be constructed all the way to the signal on Velachery Main Road.

The early completion of pending work in the region should be the goal. This will serve as an alternative stretch to GST Road in Tambaram region and would also reduce traffic congestion.

R. V. Baskaran is a resident of Selaiyur

'Stop making this area a dumping ground'

An area near Shri Sathya Sai Nagar in Medavakkam is being used as a dumping ground, creating unhygienic conditions and health concerns.

Further, many construction activities in this area cause rainwater to stagnate, creating a problem for pedestrians as motorists inadvertently splash dirty water on them.

Santosh Iyer



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PRINCE FREDERICK

Walks decoding neighbourhoods have a thick cladding of facts, usually ferreted out of yellowing documents. Emotions come into play only as the accompanist, never the guitar-strumming, crooning frontman. Facts and feelings meet without getting entwined. A walk titled "Chetpet" takes a detour from this standard format, having almost every fact infused with emotion. Designed as a community-led walk, that infusion is not just acceptable, but desirable.

Authored by Yein Udaan, a non-profit in the education sector, this walk is still softly trodden, being just two outings old. In October 2024 and for Women's Day in 2025, the walk was conducted in collaboration with Madras Inherited, which seeks to preserve and celebrate the heritage of the city.

Ashmita Athreya, lead storyteller and head of operations at Madras Inherited, observes that her organisation imparted to the Yein Udaan team, largely composed of members from an "invisible" part of Chetpet, an understanding of what makes a walk stick in the head long after the shuffle of curious feet had died down; how to delineate the route and integrate storytelling into it. "This is structured as a cultural walk. Community history is central to it. It is a sharing of stories about the community," Ashmita explains.

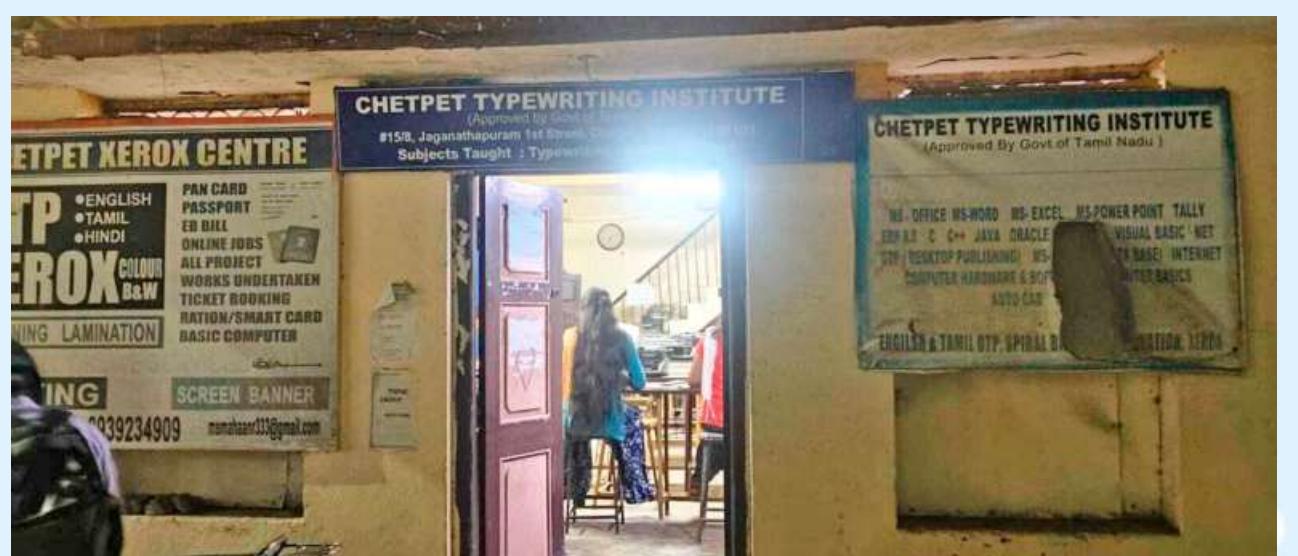
Last week, a diluted version of "Chetpet" was organised off the cuff for *The Hindu Downtown*. It was led by those who derive their identity from this Chetpet, which lies on the northern side of McNichols Road. Symbolically, on the leeward side, if one is aware that on the opposite side lies the upscale Harrington Road with its grid of car-lined avenues and a scatter of educational institutions whose uniform, parents would give their right arm for their children to wear.

On this side, invite yourself to Jaganathapuram, Brindavanan, Mangalapuram and MS Nagar, low-income neighbourhoods with a majority of homes battling poverty on an everyday basis, measuring success by how well they scraped through the long day. The average monthly income of the households here falls in the range of ₹4,000 to ₹8,000, remarks Vedika Agarwal, founder of Yein Udaan, which runs three after-school learning spaces for children in the community with a kindergarten unit thrown into the mix. Vedika adds that in a significant number of homes, the men fritter away the family's earnings on alcohol, and some of these men also shirk work, placing finances under further stress. Domestic violence is rife. And back home from school, children are faced with an unsafe and unconducive environment for studies, Vedika elaborates. This side of Chetpet is



Spotlight on an invisible landscape

A community-led walk fashioned by Yein Udaan with the help of Madras Inherited seeks to capture the spirit and aspirations of the people in a portion of Chetpet that is unknown to the wider world, except for its historic Dhobikhana



(Clockwise from top left) a 2012-dated file photo of the Dhobikhana in Chetpet; the Yein Udaan team on the recent walk; the walk in October 2024; and the one for women's day in 2025; the old typewriting institute. PHOTOS: R. RAVINDRAN, PRINCE FREDERICK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

Yein Udaan as volunteers. Vennila is employed at the non-profit as social worker for the last three years.

And the fifth one is Vedika Agarwal. The Yein Udaan founder is an outsider holding a "green card" in this Chetpet by virtue of her work, one that brings a rare empathy to its children. Given her privileged background, Vedika's decision to carve out a career in this urban slum with social fractures has left people in her circle and outside surprised as well as impressed. Her work rooted in what comes across as a deep care for the children of this area (watch her TED talk at KC High in 2023 on YouTube), insid-

ers instinctively treat her as their own. She is 'Vedika miss' not only to the nearly 350 children currently at the three after-school learning centres, but also to their parents and grandparents. Due to Vedika's popularity in these neighbourhoods, the walk moves in fits and starts, much like a drive in rush-hour traffic on nearby Sterling Road and McNichols Road, being interrupted by exchange of pleasantries.

Vedika points to what are line houses where optimisation of space is at play. Part of a row-house format or not, most houses across the four neighbourhoods are matchbox-sized: from the outside,

The wider world has little interest for this part of Chetpet. And it stays largely in oblivion. This section draws outside eyes for its Dhobikhana, the second oldest in the country having been established in 1902 as the "Madras Municipal Dhobikhana", its foundation stone laid on December 8 that year by Colonel Sir George Moore. Even this attention is short-spanned and seasonal, usually unfurled around Madras Day, and with the shifting of the news cycle, this Chetpet gets buried again deep in a mass grave of headlines

one can see how cramped the space inside would be. In dysfunctional households, such living spaces disperse tensions between father and mother instantly to the children. Vedika and her team take it upon themselves to engage with such families in the interest of the children's studies and holistic development. And that often means having tough conversations.

In Jaganathapuram, one has a glimpse of the Dhobikhana. With one phase under renovation, the entire Dhobikhana has come under a veil and is now off-limits. The renovation extends beyond the workspace to include living quarters. Vennila notes some of the families have moved out temporarily, and some others are staying on, having found rental accommodation elsewhere within the locality. She adds that in another part of the locality, what was a market (loosely called "fish market") was pulled down to raise a facility for

those in the traditional laundering business to conduct it.

Vennila reveals that during the two walks, a nonagenarian-lady familiar with the Dhobikhana dwelt on the daily grind of the families that depend on it for sustenance. Entire families are engaged in this work, the children pitching in before they leave for school and after they return home. Vennila notes that those working in the Dhobikhana constitute just one segment of residents. Among the rest of the populace, a majority work as daily wagers.

Another stop is an Yein Udaan learning centre, located on the first floor of a building and it has been taken on rent. Vedika volunteers information about the space: previously, a school (Lourde Nursery) functioned for over two decades up till the pandemic struck, which proved its death blow. The pandemic led to changes in topography, Vedika goes on, pointing to slightly bigger houses, some of them compact apartments. Rendered jobless due to the fallout of the pandemic, some residents sold their properties. Vennila notes the presence of an old typewriting institute – Chetpet Typewriting Institute, said to be five decades old – provides a sense of continuity.

At the afore-mentioned first-floor learning centre, children have their noses buried in books. But a break is round that corner, when those same noses would be buried in plates of snacks. Vedika remarks these are healthy eats made at homes of Yein Udaan staff, taking turns. Twenty-four out of 28 staffers are from the community. The payment they receive for making these eats augments their income; and resources are ploughed back into the community. It is a practice of circular economy, she adds.

What follows is a brief stop at Ambedkar Playground which sports a football turf; and some of the children from the after-school learning programme, including girls, are being coached by members of a non-profit, Life Is A Ball, that uses sports, particularly football for empowerment. Vennila remarks that decades ago, this Chetpet would have a regular taste of gangster violence, recalling an incident she witnessed as a seven-year-old from behind the half-open doors of her house. Thirty-seven now, she observes the area is a far cry from that reality, being peaceful. "Decades ago, residents seeking to keep youngsters from falling into bad influences would organise kabbadi tournaments," she shares.

The walk ends where it began at the Yein Udaan learning centre on McNichols Road, a facility whose exterior with its brick design leaves one in no doubt about its former life. It was the Chetpet police station before the personnel moved to a well-appointed facility on Mayor Ramanathan Salai. The old building functions as an Yein Udaan learning centre.

ILLUSTRATION:
SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

Apartments have to get their 'Act' together

LIFFY THOMAS

A year since Tamil Nadu Apartment Ownership Rules 2024 prepared by the Housing and Urban Development Department came into effect, many apartment complexes in Chennai are yet to complete the process involving registration or renewal of association status.

Tamil Nadu Gazette dated September 24, 2024 requires owners of units in an apartment (starting from four-flat apartments to massive multiple-tower societies) to submit "Form-A" towards initial registration. It wants apartments with multiple blocks/towers in a compound to form a federation, and make bye-laws. Irrespective of the size of the apartment, flat owners are required to appoint an auditor, submit audited accounts and balance sheets.

The Act provides an impetus to redevelopment projects, allowing owners to demolish a building if there is consensus

from two-third of apartment owners. Likewise, it empowers the association to take action against residents erring to pay their maintenance bills. There are many features in favour of owners, but communities *The Hindu Downtown* spoke to note the process is being delayed due to challenges in the system. Some communities cite lack of awareness and many are said to be buying time.

Most resident associations were previously registered under Societies Act. Now they have to migrate to Tamil Nadu Apartment Act and begin by completing requirements in "Form A".

Ragamalika Apartments in Mandaveli, a registered association, is finding it difficult to renew its registration as per the new Act. While the Act is clear, they are unsure where and how to process it and whether any acknowledgement will be provided. Apartments with less than 15 units say too much documentation discourages them from getting the association registered.

Real estate consultants say they are getting more inquiries from owners of buildings seeking to take up redevelopment in helping register the association, as also those looking for help in drafting bye-laws.

Ongoing projects

Six years ago, House of Hiranan-dani in Egattur formed a registered body involving nine towers. Now the gated community has 14 towers and more are under different stages of construction. The Act requires them to form a federation but as the developer is still working on projects, the current association has time in hand.

On the need for a federation, Raghavan Murti, an active member of the gated community, says, when the builder leaves the scene, there are roads, club house and other common amenities that have to be maintained. "We need a common body when dispute arises or to negotiate issues between associations, so a federation has to take shape sometime," he says.

Validation for this gated community's governance model

From the get-go, a gated community in Kolathur – Orchid Springs – has been following "a federal model of community governance". That has made the gated community ready for the Tamil Nadu Apartment Ownership Rules 2024 nine years in advance. One of its requirements is that communities with multiple towers and blocks have an association for each of the blocks/towers and an overarching federation over them.

According to Ganapathy Suresh, founding president, Orchid Springs All Owners Association, the community has been following this model since residents started moving in to the community from 2015 onwards. This is indeed impressive when set against a backdrop where similar gated communities are still only chewing the cud over this stipulation, now almost a year old.

Under this model, each block has their own president, secretary and treasurer and maintenance fee is handled by the respective association.

An amount required for the upkeep of common amenities is paid to the Federation, which is like an apex body that is represented by three members from each block.

Orchid Springs has more than 2000 flats spread across eight blocks.

"In such a decentralised approach, there is better accountability, transparency and a low probability of pilferage," says Ganapathy, adding that every association keeps account of their money.

This system works well for tenants as well. "The flats in ev-

ery block are of different sizes, ranging from 600 sq.ft. to 5,000 sq.ft., and the financial status of every resident would be different. So maintenance is charged based on the size of the flat and the amenity one is availing," says Ganapathy. He had advocated a similar system at Gokulam Flats in Nolambur, which has 4,500 flats and 17 associations, before he moved in to this community in Kolathur.

The decentralised approach also ensures there are more office bearers in the Federation who should have more say in matters concerning residents.

In such a decentralised approach, there is better accountability, transparency and a low probability of pilferage

He says the Act empowers owners to take legal action against residents erring in paying their maintenance bills.

The gated community is still working on completing the process towards registration that the Tamil Nadu Apartment Owners Act mandates. Three blocks have submitted Form A (an important step in the registration process).

Once all the eight blocks get their Form A done, the next step would be to apply for Form B.

"All apartments must follow this seriously otherwise the State Government has the power to disqualify the old association or freeze accounts," says Ganapathy, adding that the new Act gives more power to residents associations.



Mind matters



File photo of city students executing an art project

LIFFY THOMAS

A student of a city-based arts and science college recently approached a counsellor seeking help to deal with distress resulting from body shaming. Bullied on the campus, the hosteller was skipping classes and isolating herself.

While a majority of colleges have an in-house counsellor, it would help to offer them the option of a helpline number.

Thiruvanmiyur-based Dhruti Charitable Trust, registered in 2024 as a non-profit, is alive to the need for both. It conducts free mental health workshops in colleges and also offers a helpline number which promises

access to professional counsellors virtually and the comfort of confidentiality.

The idea to offer mental health support to youngsters came to Ramji Venkatachari, a non-resident Indian and founder of the Trust, when he spent a semester as researcher with a cohort of 50 students of B.Sc Rural Agriculture of Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research. The students lived in a village and visited agri establishments as part of the programme.

"Some of the behaviours of these students puzzled me. A few would just cry for no reason. Boys would deal with their frustration with a touch of aggression," says Ramji. Later, surveys conducted among colleg-

Through free mental health awareness workshops in colleges and a helpline number, Dhruti Charitable Trust is reaching out to youngsters facing stress and depression

es convinced the tech entrepreneur that there was a need for mental health services for college students. "I am an alumnus of Bharat University, I left for the United States to pursue my Ph.D in the 1990s. Now that I am winding down and coming to settle down in Chennai, this is also a way of giving back to society," says 58-year-old Ramji.

Engaging with colleges

The Trust is currently engaged with 30 city colleges (both arts and science and engineering). "We are booked for 50 sessions between August and September," says Ramji, adding that professional counsellors conduct interactive sessions that go on for well over an hour.

Besides giving colleges access to a dedicated helpline number, the team is working on setting up peer support groups in institutes.

"We are going to select five to six students, mentor them to conduct these mental well-being sessions in their own colleges and function like a club. We will be starting this in five colleges as a pilot model this year before we expand. The groundwork for this has already begun at Asan Memorial College and Bharat University," he says.

For more details, visit <https://dhrutitrust.org>

Home appliance brand opens showroom in Tambaram



Darling, a leading home appliances stores in Tamil Nadu, has opened its 163rd showroom on Rajaji Street in the Tambaram (West) region.

S. R. Raja, MLA, Tambaram Assembly Constituency, and K. Vasanth Kumar, Mayor, Tambaram City Municipal Corporation, inaugurated the showroom.

Spanning 25,000 square feet, the store offers a diverse range of appliances, including television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, and mobile phones, said a release.

To celebrate the store's opening, discounts are offered on television set, refrigerator, washing machine and air conditioner.

At the opening ceremony, several new products were launched, including Haier's 100-inch TV, Samsung's 25 kg washing machine, and V-Guard's new water heater and fan.

A unique cooling room where customers can test an air conditioner's performance before making a purchase can be experienced, the release added.

Rajasthan craft mela

As part of the Navratri Golu, artisans from across India are holding 'Rajasthan craft mela' in Nanganallur.

From saris, handloom bedspreads, golu dolls, export curtains, bags, Kashmir Pashmina shawls, pillow covers to antique jewellery products, there's a lot to choose from.

A discount of 10 percent and 20 percent is offered on handicrafts and handloom items respectively, said a press release.

The mela is on at Sri Jain Ranganayaki Community Hall, 18th Street, Nanganallur, till September 14.

Engineering college distributes scholarships

Meenakshi College of Engineering, K.K. Nagar (West), recently conducted induction day for the first-year students of B.E., B.Tech., B.Arch., MBA, and MCA programmes.

G. Ra. Gokul, college chairman, motivated the students to make the best use of opportunities, emphasising the importance of disci-

ples, innovation and holistic development.

The event also included introductions to academic regulations, student support systems and co-curricular activities, said a release.

Scholarships worth ₹75 lakh were distributed to more than 100 first-year students of the above-mentioned academic pro-

grammes in the name of founder-trustees A. N. Radhakrishnan Scholarship (for boys) and Meenakshi Ammal Scholarship (for girls).

Other dignitaries who took part in the event are N. Rengarajan, executive director; and Charles Godwin; and Ganesh Venkatraman, principal.

Workshop on hospital compliance

Sha (Med) Compliance and Services Private Limited is organising a one-day workshop on 'Hospital Compliance' on September 6 at Teach auditorium, Spastic Society of Tamil Nadu in Taramani.

Hospitals from across the State, retired government officials from the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services, Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Tamil Nadu Police, and the Greater Chennai Corporation, are partici-

pating in it, said a press release. Dr. H. V. Hande, former Health Minister of Tamil Nadu, will inaugurate the 'Hospital License and Compliance Software'.

Dr. Hande will be bestowed with the 'Beeshma of Healthcare Services' award by Tamilisai Soundararajan, former Governor of Telangana and Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.

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A dance performance; and the audience at Shri Krishnaswamy College for Women.

Little Krishnas and Radhas dazzle the audience

The annual event organised by *The Hindu Downtown* enjoyed a good response with 700 children taking part in it



Close to 700 children participated in 'Maya Kannan' - Janmashtami Contest 2025 organised by *The Hindu Downtown* for children in the age group of three to eight years, in keeping with the festive spirit of the season. Sixty-six winners from across the five zones of



Downtown (Adyar, Anna Nagar, Mylapore, T. Nagar and Tambaram) were felicitated on August 24 at an event held at Shri Krishnaswamy College for Women in Anna Nagar.

The contest had a good response with participants asked to dress up as Krishna or Radha and perform a dance or sing or recite slokas in praise of the Lord. The

A blight on Velachery Main Road



▼
A view of the damaged section of Velachery Main Road that provides both motorists and pedestrians with an unsavoury road-user experience. This section of the arterial road is found in Medavakkam, where Jeyachandran Textiles Pallikaranai is located on the opposite side. During rush hour, when vehicular traffic crawls on Velachery Main Road, this broken patch makes for slow-moving traffic, as motorists try to avoid it. PHOTOS: R. RAVINDRAN.

TAMBARAM ZONE WINNERS



Hanvika Sri



S. Aditya



Riktha Sriram

There was an excellent Barathanatyam group performance by the students of Shri Krishnaswamy Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Anna Nagar. The winners were felicitated by Y.V. Nirajan Krishna from Gopuram products, T. Manimalai, principal of Shri Krishnaswamy Matriculation Higher secondary school and other special guests.

The title partner for the event was Gopuram Turmeric Powder and Kumkum; the food partner was Madras Coffee House, and the venue partner was Shri Krishnaswamy College for Women, Anna Nagar; Water Partner was Repute Water; the Tech Partner was Hilaptop.com. Gift Sponsors were DIFA, Lalwani, Medimix, My Resale Plot.com, Naga, P S Tamarind, RAS Chekku Oil and Vivekananda Sarees.

Entries invited for Made of Chennai photography contest



streets, traditions and everyday moments of joy.

The last date to send in entries is September 13, 2025.

The Hindu Made of Chennai is presented by Casagrand and powered by SRM; the initiative is held in association with Union Bank of India. The contest is supported by Tata Tea Chakra Gold and Tata Coffee as Associate Partners, while Big FM, Fever FM and Radio One are on board as Radio Partners. Madras Photo Bloggers are the Expert Partner for the contest.

Participants can register by scanning the QR code. The top 50 winners will be rewarded.



The *Hindu* has announced the launch of *The Hindu* Made of Chennai Photography Contest 2025, inviting shutterbugs to capture the city's festive spirit through their lens. With the theme "Celebrations of Chennai", the contest encourages participants to showcase how the city comes alive in its