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A giant's sigh on CPR Salai



PRINCE FREDERICK

At a rain-kissed, glistening CP Ramaswamy Salai on the morning of November 29, the tall stump of what would once have been an elegant Elephant earpod tree stood like a centurion-batter carrying the bat but defeated, having run out of partners. The felled branches are piled neatly around the stump. The stump is stripped of its bark, except for a patch clinging on to it. It also displays scars and bulbous growths, suggesting a chequered life. There are no leaves in sight.

T.D. Babu, member of Chennai District Green committee and a key member of tree conservation NGO Nizhal identifies this tree as an Elephant earpod tree, an exotic species that was introduced and naturalised in these parts much like the raintree. "The Elephant earpos tree makes a good avenue tree," Babu adds

When this journalist quizzed the people around about this particular example of the Elephant earpod tree, one of them pointed out that the tree had given way in its upper parts which seemed set for a fall, and therefore, had to be cut keeping public safety in mind.

Babu remarks: "The trees on C.P. Ramaswamy Salai are subjected to great stress: the cementing around them makes them weak; and the lights placed on them to draw attention to commercial establishments do not contribute positively to their health either. On this road, sometime ago, a commercial



▼ The Elephant earpod tree on CPR Salai on November 29. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

establishment had to be pulled up for abusing a tree. This Elephant earpod tree looks diseased and could have suffered abuse too. What has befallen this tree should set off alarm bells loud enough for Greater Chennai Corporation to hear: regular monitoring of tree health matters. And GCC should be proactive and prevent damage to the trees on its roads."

Monsoon helpline



A rainy day in Chennai.
File Photo:
B. Jothi
Ramalingam

Monsoon can trigger barely concealed problems, requiring urgent intervention. Trees would require trimming, fallen branches might need to be cleared and potholes fixed. Rains can cause blocks in sewage lines as rainwater can carry trash into them, thereby gumming up the works.

GCC

1913: for any monsoon-related complaint that has to be attended by Greater Chennai Corporation
Residents can also reach out to GCC

through its social media platforms such as X @chennaicorp and Instagram @Chennaicorp

CMWSSB

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

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A street in Royapettah where garbage bins undergo a thorough ‘inspection’



▼ If one wants to learn about a neighbourhood, they ought to look into its garbage bins at the end of day, when they are filled to the brim and like a sloppy eater, let some waste fall to the ground. Two garbage bins at Chella Pillayar Street in Royapettah point to a neighbourhood where activities overlap. There are homes; and there are shops. These two garbage bins are stationed at the most inconvenient spot, at a bottleneck in the street. Much before the garbage truck rolls in and sweep their contents into the waste collection body, there is an inspection of the bins. The “inspectors” nuzzle against the trash rising over the rims of the bins, pull them down and feed on them. In these images from the evening of November 27, 2025, two bovines are seen inspecting the garbage in the bins at this street. Usually, the number of “inspectors” is higher. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

READERS WRITE

‘No pavements on a section of Anna Salai in Teynampet’

Around Teynampet signal, much of Anna Salai lacks usable pavements. Pedestrians have to walk on the road, running the risk of being hit by vehicles. A star hotel has gobbled up space that belongs to pedestrians. With the flyover work under way on this section, it is a nightmare to walk here.

It is high time the Government viewed pedestrians as part of the development process.

*Ramdas Naik
Cit Colony, Mylapore*



They enjoy ‘roaming rights’ at Marina



▼ Mylapore resident Kasim Razvi, who is a regular beach goer, shared photos of cattle having unfettered “roaming rights” at the Marina beach. They occupy the pavements and the sands. He says one can see these cows every day on the beach, and their numbers keep growing.

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

The service is available in select trains under the Chennai Division of Southern Railway

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 (conducted during the financial year 2023-2024) witnessed, it has been regularised.

Under this initiative, a licensee

will manage the entire process, including procurement, mechanized washing, packing, loading, distribution, and storage of bed linen. The service will initially be implemented on ten trains maintained by the Chennai Division for a period of three years, generating an annual license fee of ₹28,27,653, adds the release.

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.



Representational picture only

A fundraiser concert

Orchestra maestro UK Murali is celebrating his 40-year music journey with a concert on November 30 at Kamarajar Arangam; proceeds from the show will go towards establishment of Anandam Free Palliative Care Centre

Legendary orchestra maestro UK Murali is celebrating his 40 years of musical excellence on November 30 at Kamarajar Arangam. From 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., three grand musical sessions (10 a.m.-1 p.m., 2 p.m.-5 p.m., 6 p.m.-10 p.m.) will feature performances by over 100 celebrated singers and artistes. UK Murali is dedicating this entire celebration as a fundraising initiative for the upcoming Anandam Free Palliative Care Centre at Kalikuppam in Ambattur, said a press release.

Twenty-two-years-old, the voluntary or-

ganisation runs a free old age home since 2003. The home now has 110 senior citizens. Anandam Free Educational Assistance has been running since 2010, where over 270 students from Classes III to XII attend free evening tuitions; and over 250 college students and over 90 school students receive full financial support.

Anandam Free Medical Care Centre supports underserved families. Anandam Special School for Children with Special Needs offers over 17 specialised therapies for children with autism, dyslexia, Down's Syndrome and multiple learning difficulties.

Anandam goshala, located in Melkondaiyur near Tiruvallur, takes care of 122 cows, calves and bulls. Anandam also runs bakery, tailoring, computer and napkin units where single mothers and vocational-skills-training students work confidently, said the release. The Anandam Free Palliative Care Centre is a 50-bed facility that is being opened for terminal ill cancer patients to live their final days with dignity and comfort. The bhoomi pooja was performed on October 26, 2025, and construction has begun, added the release.

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, Vadivelu 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', 'Adamodi 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 Alava'. The concert concluded with a 'Sindhu Bhairavi Thillana', executed with precision, the release added.

Eight committees at model United Nations

This was the 12th edition of the event organised by P.S. Senior Secondary School



Vidya Mandir received the Best Delegation award.

The 12th edition of P S MUN 2025 organised by P.S. Senior Secondary School was held on October 27 and 28, upholding its motto 'Sreyasah Sadhanam' meaning ultimate excellence. Bringing together young minds from across the city, the conference featured eight committees

and over 300 delegates, guided by a strong executive board and dedicated organising team, says a press release.


Day two of the event was conducted online due to the rains. The valedictory ceremony was graced by S. Swaminathan, former IFS officer, who shared his

insightful experiences and distributed the prizes.

Eight prizes were given to each committee and points were given to delegations based on their awards, said a release. The Best Delegation award was handed to Vidya Mandir, Mylapore whose delegates dominated the conference.

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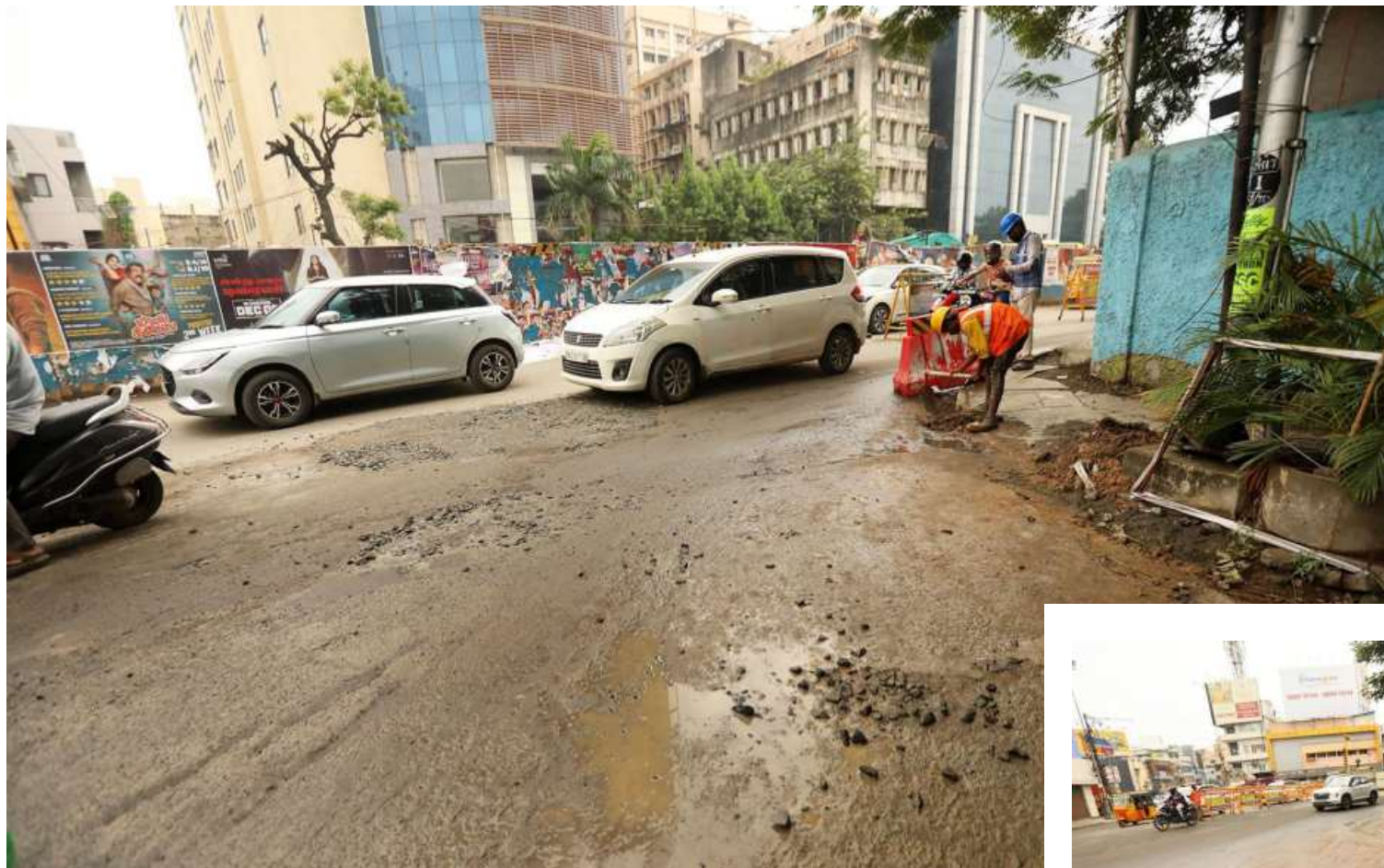
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Motorcyclists on a *slippery slope* in Teynampet



work), the junction now takes a greater volume of vehicular traffic, hence a battered patch or two. The broken parts receive patchwork. But the greater concern lies next to these patchworks, slush resulting from a nexus between mud and rainwater. In recent days, efforts to clear the mud at this junction have played out regularly. It would be commendable to address the problem at its roots and not when it has taken on a gooey, dangerous form. The images were taken on November 29, 2025.

A worker clearing the mud at Anna Salai-Thyagaraya Road in Teynampet; and a view of the slushy part of Thyagaraya Road near the junction. Photos: Prince Frederick

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

If a motorcyclist were compelled to take a challenging course, and the only relief offered to them being the permission to choose between “bumpy” and “slippery”, they would do

well to plump for the former. A bumpy surface is generally only uncomfortable; and dangerous only in extreme situations. A slippery surface has that order reversed. Danger usually strikes first, catching the motorcyclist by surprise; and the discomfort following that danger can be unbearable.

At the junction of Anna Salai and Thyagaraya Road in Teynampet, both ‘bumpy’ and ‘slippery’ are present side by side. With traffic from Anna Salai headed towards Gemini flyover being diverted through Thyagaraya Road (as part of the larger traffic diversions related to State Highways’ flyover



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, manure 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.

Special buses for Sabarimala

The State Express Transport Corporation, Government of Tamil Nadu, is operating special buses to Sabarimala.

The SETC is operating non-air-conditioned seating and sleeper buses from Hosur, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Salem, and Karur to Pamba till January 16.

The buses will not be operated from December 26 to 29. The Travancore Devaswom Board has announced that the Sabarimala Sree Ayyappan Temple will be closed from December 27 to 30 till 5 p.m.

For details, contact 9445014424, 9445014463.

Air-conditioned buses

The State Express Transport Corporation, Government of Tamil Nadu, will operate ultra-deluxe and air-conditioned seating and sleeper facility buses to Thiruvananthapuram in view of ‘Karthiga Deepam’ on December 02 and 03, from Nagercoil, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Senkottai, Madurai, and Coimbatore.



From Chennai, the transport corporation, in view of ‘Pournami’, is operating more than 150 ultra-deluxe air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned sleeper and seating facility buses on December 03 and 04. Passengers can book tickets on www.tnsetc.in and the TNSTC official app. For details, contact Madurai 9445014426; Tirunelveli 9445014428; Nagercoil 9445014432; Tuticorin 9445014430; Coimbatore 9445014435; Chennai 9445014463; and 9445014424.



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 compulso-

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.



Free tickets to Junior Men's Hockey World Cup



▼ Glimpses of the inaugural ceremony of the FIH Men's Junior Men's Hockey World Cup 2025 that is under way in Chennai. The matches are on at SDAT-Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium till December 10. According to a report in *Sportstar*, Hockey India has announced free tickets for fans to watch the matches. The virtual free tickets can be booked through ticketgenie website or the Hockey India app. PHOTOS: RAGU R

Old initiative puts out new verdant leaves

During cyclonic storms, when RWAs worry about leaf litter, this Association managing five streets in Kotturpuram has it sorted

PRINCE FREDERICK

Around the time this article was being walked to the press, cyclonic storm Ditwah was still gentle on Chennai. It had conducted a dress rehearsal though, shaking the trees with mild intensity. Around that time, one knew what to expect, and the images paraded across the mind's eye. It would get windier, and under duress, the avenue trees would weep, shedding green tears. An out-of-season shedding – in Chennai, the dry season when deciduous trees get out of their old rags is still some distance away – it would cause streets to be matted with wet leaves. In the days immediately after the storm, the decaying vegetative matter will be felt by the nostrils of morning walkers. Conservancy workers would sweep in, gather the leaves in small heaps. In some neighbourhoods, the heaps would be promptly carted away in vehicles. In some others, the heaps would tarry a day or two longer, the vehicles not showing up. On five streets in Kotturpuram, one would expect the script to be different and refreshingly distinct. The leaves would not leave the streets. The heaps would be deposited inside 27 leaf litter bins, and allowed to turn into compost, with periodic watering by a gardener to aid the composting process. The compost, harvested in cycles, will be distributed to residents, who will use it for their plants.

The ready-made plan to deal with leaves that fall to the ground in this neighbourhood is years old, and it was scripted by Nawab Gardens Residents Welfare Association (NGRWA).

An initiative started by a resi-



▼ Leaf-litter bins on Ranjit Road in Kotturpuram. PHOTO: PRINCE FREDERICK

dent welfare association can wither away for want of sustained watering particularly when the RWA's reins have changed hands many a time. In a slightly better scenario, the initiative might be alive, but diseased displaying unmistakable signs of ill-health, as unmistakable as leaf spot disease. But at the five

streets in Kotturpuram, this initiative is putting out fresh verdant leaves. The bins stationed across these streets to gather leaf litter numbered 24 the day in 2019 *The Hindu Downtown* first visited this initiative. Three up since then, the bins now number 27.

The pattern of engagement un-

derpinning the initiative is simple but seems robust. Subhashini Raja, joint secretary, NGRWA, explains that conservancy workers (from Urbaser Sumeet) sweep the leaves and deposit them in the bins. As these workers have a deadline to meet, they will execute this work quickly, and a few plastic items are

likely to end up in the leaf litter bins.

The gardener employed by NGRWA will sift through the leaves and remove the plastics. Subhashini adds that she and another member of NGRWA, Chandra Prabhakar, are tasked with monitoring the leaf-litter management.

A 2026 calendar *designed by the neurodivergent*

Thirteen young adults from Mirra Charitable Trust in Velachery are behind this initiative

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mirra Charitable Trust unveiled the sixth edition of its annual student-designed calendar at Gandhi Nagar Ladies Club on November 25, celebrating the march of neurodivergent young adults into pursuits largely viewed as the preserves of the neurotypical.

Thirteen final-year students in the age group of 15 to 30 years pursuing a digital literacy course, Unnati, were involved in this calendar project, giving inputs on the layout and design that shape each of the pages. Saritha PR, the special educator who drives the Unnati programme, guided the students.

Students worked with Photoshop, Illustrator, Canva and AI-enabled tools. This year's calendar theme, digitalisation, was brought to life through months of exploration, design and careful refinement, all done in the classroom in Velachery where the Trust offers classes to empower individuals



with special needs.

Digitisation is one of the pillars of Mirra, so it was only natural that a calendar project had this as the theme. Last year's theme was inclusion.

"What digitisation can do for individuals with disabilities is immense, especially for those who are non-verbal. It can be a big support system to them," says Lakshmi Satish, co-founder and trustee.

The calendar project is a big step for this 17-year-old NGO towards getting students to learn and create and live with dignity.

Selling calendars is not the ultimate aim of this initiative.

"The calendar project is a way



During the launch of the calendar.

of advocacy for us – it underlines who these students are, what they do and what should be the role of

society in creating this ecosystem. Every page in the calendar is a reminder of the role each of us can play to make society more inclusive," says Lakshmi, adding that it is sent to the homes of people as a New Year gift.

Starting with wall calendars to desk calendar, this project has evolved based on the feedback of well-wishers. This year, it consists of a calendar-cum-organiser.

This annual project has seen many success stories as well.

A group of students and parents from the first batch of the calendar project got together and formed an enterprise in graphic

designing.

"We incubated that company for a year, teaching them what a startup does; how to market their products; at what stage should parents step out of the way. Now for the last three years that company is running independently," says Lakshmi. Another batch also went on to start a similar enterprise and some even went in for open employment.

For details, visit <http://www.mirract.com>

The launch

The calendar was released by Dr. Nitin M. Nagarkar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (MHS), SRM Institute of Science and Technology and Prof. T. S. Veeragoudhaman, Dean, SRM College of Physiotherapy. Both guests described the launch as "a memorable day," acknowledging the dedication of students, facilitators and families, says a press release. Speaking about Mirra's digital literacy programme, Unnati, Dr. Nagarkar noted that "the structured programme has helped the students develop their skills, confidence and become employable." Each page reflects collaboration, attention to colour, layout, narrative and a joyful ownership of the creative process, the release adds.

Five from city win Abacus competition

Five students from Chennai – Karan Kathiravan, M. Kavin, Sharvesh V. S., S.S. Suthan Naresh and Sai Charan L – won the first runner up at the SIP Abacus International Prodigy Competition 2025.

The SIP Abacus International Prodigy Competition 2025 was held on November 16 with more than 5,700 young prodigies from India and 11 other countries participating. Organised by SIP Academy India, the event brought together children aged 6 to 12 years, their parents, and mentors for a day of intellectual excitement, cultural exchange, and achievement.

Participants showcased extraordinary mental arithmetic abilities, solving complex calculations in seconds.

Three students Yugan R S, Y G Harshan Aathithyaa and Dhiganth P from Namakkal won the championship of the SIP Abacus International Prodigy Competition 2025.

The event was graced by G. Ramesh Babu, Scientist and Deputy Director, SDSC SHAR and Karthik - Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mylapore, who applauded the young participants for their dedication and encouraged them to continue dreaming big.

Forty differently abled students receive scholarships



on the legacy of the Ranga Rao Memorial School for Differently Abled (RMSD) in Mysuru, which has been transforming the lives of visually challenged girl children since 1988.

For the fourth consecutive year, Cycle Pure Agarbathi has extended scholarships to 40 differently-abled students.

Launched in 2022, the initiative focuses on supporting differently-abled girls aged 12-17 from economically challenged backgrounds, enabling them to access quality education, life skills, and holistic growth. The initiative builds

Music concert

As part of 'Karthigai Eka-dashi', 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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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.

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 profes-

sionals 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.

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.

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 Organization - 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