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'Mend Blue Beach Road'



A section of Blue Beach Road in Neelankarai.

VISVESH ARUNACHALAM

Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) completed the laying of water and sewage pipes on Blue Beach Road in Neelankarai on East Coast Road this March; and has handed the road back to Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC).

GCC is dragging its feet on road-relaying work. The road is battered and riddled with potholes. Com-

plaints to GCC have not elicited any response. Following the recent rain, the road has gone from bad to worse. In a recent instance, a milk vendor's container fell and the entire milk got spilt when his scooter got stuck in the slush. Driving on this road is a huge challenge; even navigating it by foot is uncomfortable. GCC should carry out patch-work as a quick fix.

Visvesh Arunachalam,
Neelankarai



Registrations open for Madras Day quiz

Ispahani Centre in collaboration with X Quiz It presents the second edition of Quiz@123 – a quiz that celebrates the spirit and legacy of Madras.

Part of the Madras Day celebrations held every August to commemorate the founding of the city, this quiz promises a delightful journey through the streets, stories and heritage of Madras, says a press release.

The highlights of the quiz contest are as follows: it is a team-based quiz with two participants per team.

It is open to all age groups. It includes rounds that cover history, culture and landmarks. The quiz will take place on August 23, 2025 at Ispahani Centre in Nungambakkam.

The link to register for the quiz is: <https://bit.ly/123quiz2025>

You can be our volunteer-writer

Dear readers, you can be our volunteer-writer by writing to us about issues and events in your neighbourhood. You should send the write-ups to downtownfeedback@thehindu.co.in. Letters must carry the contact number.



Dry waste collection drive in Padur

A dry waste collection drive will be held on July 27 at Padur Panchayat Office on Old Mahabalipuram Road.

Time: From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

According to a press release, the event is organised by the local body with the support of Spreco Recycling, a waste aggregator.

Residents can drop items like clothes, footwear, bags, glass bottles, newspapers, books, electronic waste, X-rays, empty tablet strips.

'Fix railings on the median here'

Near Velachery MRTS flyover, pedestrians jump over the median and dart across the road



T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

The median around the point where the Velachery MRTS flyover meets the road does not

do a great job of preventing pedestrians from crossing over to the other side of Velachery Main Road. They scale it with ease; and the suddenness with which

these pedestrians show up on the road unsettles motorists.

Pedestrians jump over the median and dart across the road.



The point where the violations happen.
PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In recent times, there have been accidents on account of this road behaviour at the end of the flyover.

J. Moses, a motorcyclist who drives down the flyover to reach his workplace in Thiruvanmiyur, says pedestrians rushed to cross the road recently and he had to slam on the brakes to avoid a collision.

He notes that the risk is higher on the lane towards the Vijaya

Nagar junction as it is on a downward curve.

"When a motorcyclist applies the brakes suddenly, they can fall," says Moses.

One of the suggestions from motorists to the Highways Department if that railings be mounted on the median to deter pedestrians from trying to scale it. One comes across an arrangement of this kind at West Tambaram on GST Road.

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Tune in to Radio OMR

Songs discussed within a WhatsApp group by residents of the IT Highway now make up a 1000-song multi-lingual playlist on Spotify. Launched by the Federation of OMR Residents Welfare Associations, the initiative has factored in the cosmopolitan character of the region

A. SIVAKUMAR

The music scene at OMR hit a high note with OMR 360, a grand event last year by Federation of OMR Residents Associations (FOMRRA). For the uninformed, OMR 360 spotlighted talent across disciplines including music.

With the latest development – <https://radio.fomrra.org> – it is close to achieving a crescendo. Recognising the rich vein of musical talent in OMR and the residents' insatiable hunger for melodies, FOMRRA launched the Music & Lyrics WhatsApp Group (<https://music.fomrra.org>). This platform has become a veritable symphonic salon – a confluence of musicians, music lovers and enthusiasts sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and discussing everything from classical

ragas to popular chart-toppers. The group is alive with musical discourse, lyrical appreciation, and technical discussions that strike a chord with all members.

Moreover, this digital platform is a one-stop lounge for all things music – whether a parent is searching for a talented music tutor or a local shop selling instruments, the community's harmony makes it possible. Many music teachers have also joined the ensemble, adding to the harmony of growth and learning.

The melodies and songs discussed within the group are now compiled into an online playlist on the popular music app Spotify. Aptly called Radio OMR, this well-crafted collaborative symphony by OMR's music enthusiasts, is a rich tapestry woven with diverse tunes from multiple languages, genres,



days to come.

And between OMR 360 and <https://radio.fomrra.org>, FOMRRA has hit other riveting music notes.

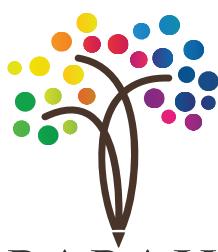
Mini Tiffin

Following OMR 360's success, a new music ensemble spun into existence – Mini Tiffin, a band convened by Umesh Deenadayalan of Sholinganallur. Their first live performance to a packed audience was a carnival of melody, featuring a delightful repertoire of OMR's resident singers.

The audience of over 2000 were swept away as the stage at Babaji Vidyasharam turned into a music fairground, creating an electrifying atmosphere of harmony and joy.

'OhMaRgazhi' unplugged

December brought the melodious magic of OhMaRgazhi, a fortnight that provided a platform for leading maestros of classical genres to enthral the residents of OMR. Their compositions brought a regal touch to the music festival.



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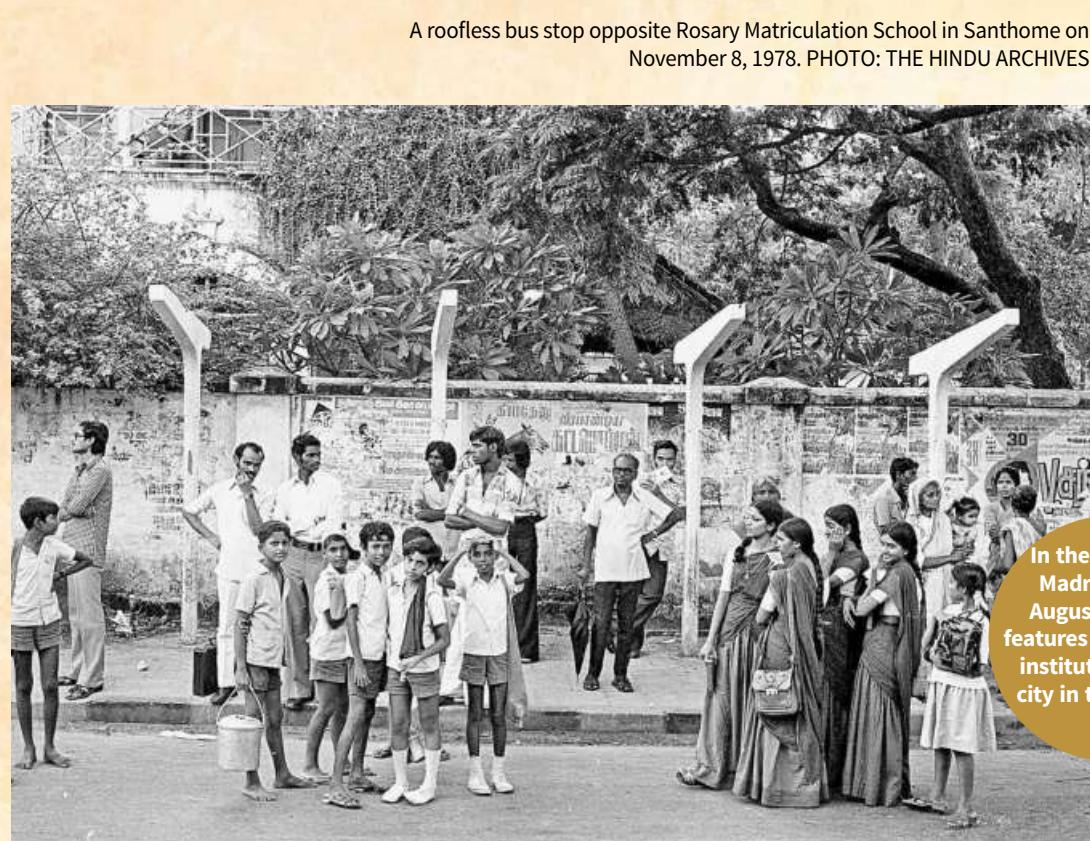


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and a whole lot of skills including good spoken English.

The sisters were particular about how we dressed to school, and plays and dance drama brought out histrionic talent in many of us.

We had two houses – Loretto and Fatima, the former identified by pink and the latter, blue. Pinafores and half saris were worn as uniform.

I was once made the "bank agent", an activity where we collected money for certain occasions and learnt how to maintain an account. We used to have cooking sessions, needle work and sewing classes under domestic science.

Whatever we learnt at school contributed to our holistic development.

Vanamala Parthasarathy is a multilingual scholar of Vaishnavism and lives in Bengaluru. She is from the 1958 batch of the school.

Those classes kindled my interest in nutrition'

Classes in household arts or home science, as it was later called, kindled my interest in nutrition and dietetics and I would go on to build a career in that discipline.

I still remember how we were taught to make ice cream in the pantry. The cycle rickshaw was our favourite mode of transport to school.

Saroja Raghavan retired as head of department of Dr. Mohan Diabetes Specialities Centre in Gopalapuram

'Rosary and its equally illustrious neighbours'

Much before Santhome High Road was lined with schools, the tram line ran from Luz Church Road to Santhome. Many working professionals used this network to head to Parrys. Later, for many Mylaporeans, this road would gain in prominence for the row of schools run by Christian organisations.

St. Raphael's was one of the oldest schools. Sometimes, one would find students moving from one school to another on the same road. Once they completed middle school at Montfort School, they would move to the next building, which would be Sand

lingdon College to write their exams and it was customary to be taken to St. Thomas Mount before appearing for the examination. Our results were displayed on the Madras University's big notice board and parents would troop in early in the morning to see their children's marks.

There are many life lessons that I have learnt from the school; and picked up many skills too, in-



thome High School. And students of Dominic Savio would join St. Bedes.

My two sisters pursued their school education in Santhome, one studying at St. Raphael's and the other at Rosary. Rosary operated a school bus, a novelty in those times. My elder sister, Late Meenakshi Subramanian served as chemistry teacher at Rosary and many of her students including "Apollo sisters" and retired Judge Prabha Sridevan were in touch with her.

So strict were the nuns that yesteryear actor and an old student of the school L. Vijayalakshmi was not permitted to sit for the matric university exam as she did not attend the selection exam.

Where the present Rosary Matriculation School is, Stella Maris College used to be before it moved to Cathedral Road in the late 50s.

K.R. Jambunathan is a long time resident of Mylapore and has been chronicling hidden stories of the neighbourhood



75 years of education in a nutshell

Old students and associates of Rosary Matriculation Higher Secondary School jog their memory and seek to capture this institution's place in the city's history

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

'One of the early Matriculation schools in Madras'

I am from the first batch of students (1950) who went to Rosary Matriculation School. My sister was studying at St. Raphael's Girls School, which followed Tamil medium of instruction, and the nuns asked my father to enrol me with Rosary as it had just opened. It was kind of trendy to study in a matriculation school then and there were only four such schools for girls in Madras of those times – Sacred Heart, Good Shepherd and CSI Ewarts being the others. Most of our school years were spent on the campus at Kutchery Road, and for a while we also shared space with Stella Matutina College of Education.

Students of all matriculation schools had to come to Lady Wil-



cluding communication skills that I developed thanks to Ms. Paul (English teacher) and principal Mother Teresa Xavier who was strict but kind at heart. Every time I recite my sloka, I am reminded of the Sanskrit master.

Dr. Swarnalatha Selvaraju is 79 years old and lives in Malaysia

"Rosary used to be a co-educational institution"

Now, one would automatically associate Rosary with education for girls, but in its early years until Fifth Form this was a co-educational institution. I have shared bench with boys as my classmates. While a majority of the staff were women, Sanskrit and Tamil subjects were handled by two male teachers.

Among the gains from studying at this institution are: a disciplined approach to life and work

LIFFY THOMAS
From The Hindu Archives

Alumnae of Rosary Matriculation Higher Secondary School during a meeting held in June.

W

hat does it take to organise a grand all-batches alumni reunion of an institution that has 75 years behind it, and never a formal alumni association in all those years?

"We have enrolled ourselves under the Society of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the congregation that runs the school. The association is now a formal entity under the Society, so that helped us plan for the D-Day, and this also gives us more credibility," says Priya, who graduated from the institution in 2003 and is an architect by profession.

In October 2024, these three old students of Rosary Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Santhome got started on an effort to gather alumni down the decades and they are still finding themselves in a last-minute scramble to tie loose ends. The platinum jubilee meetup of old students across batches and retired teachers would also signal the formation of an alumni association.

A previous attempt 15 years ago to have an association of this kind was spectacularly stillborn. The strength of the school increased four-fold in 25 years. Presiding over the silver jubilee celebration of Rosary Matriculation School, Sister Celine Xavier, principal, said that the strength of the school increased from 400 in 1950 to 1690 in 1975, says a report from *The Hindu* Archives.

"We were surprised to find the enthusiasm of students across batches in connecting with the school. When we started seeking out representatives from each batch to help us plan the reunion and find their classmates, we immediately got a response from 1962, 1964, 1965 batches," says Matengi, a student of the

anyone is expected to be ahead of a grand event they are responsible for.

One challenge that stared them in the face was getting a buy-in from the school management to organise the mega reunion. The next major thing was to have an alumni association registered.

"We have enrolled ourselves under the Society of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, the congregation that runs the school. The association is now a formal entity under the Society, so that helped us plan for the D-Day, and this also gives us more credibility," says Priya, who graduated from the institution in 2003 and is an architect by profession.

As is the case with any registered body, Rosary Alumni Association will maintain accounts and have an executive team elected.

Towards spelling out the goals and objectives of the alumni association, they have published the charter on the school website.

And then what they dreaded – bringing old Rosarians on board – seemed easier than expected thanks to social media.

"We were surprised to find the enthusiasm of students across batches in connecting with the school. When we started seeking out representatives from each batch to help us plan the reunion and find their classmates, we immediately got a response from 1962, 1964, 1965 batches," says Matengi, a student of the



30 schools take part in inter-school cultural festival

Over 650 students from 30 schools participated in Scintillations, the annual inter-school cultural fest of P.S. Higher Secondary School, held on June 27 and 28.

The theme of this year's fest was 'The Golden Era of Music'. More than 15 events were conducted that tested creativity, quick thinking, memory and articulation of students. From music and dance to TED talks and quizzes, every moment was packed with energy.

Principal Revathy Parameswaran

inaugurated the event on June 27. Sri Ranjani Santhanagopalan, Carnatic musician, was the chief guest for the valedictory function. She congratulated the winners and spoke of the opportunities available to the students.

Tasmal from Vidhya Mandir in Mylapore clinched the Mr. Scintillator title and bagged Nothing Phone worth ₹25,000, said a release. Chettinad Vidhyashram bagged the winners position followed by PSBB, Nungambakkam as runner up.

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Rescued and brought to Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary in Besant Nagar, in a state of malnourishment and paralysis, Pattu the Doberman now lives it up in the Czech Republic

Flying away to a new life



2024," says Neeraja Venkateswaran, Head of Operations at BMAD.

What followed was intense effort – as Neeraja puts it, "rigorous physiotherapy" with which "the team nursed him back to health".

"He was with us till March 2025 by then he had started walking normally again. Between March and June he was at ROA shelter run by Dinesh Baba in Koovathur on East Coast Road for temporary boarding until his departure to Czech Republic," explains Neeraja.

The rescuer brought Pattu's plight to the attention of Tamil Nadu Animal Welfare Board (TNAWB), and before long, the dog came under the care of Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD).

"He came to us on November 7,

finding his forever home 7200 kilometres away – that was the twist in the tail. After Pattu's rehabilitation was complete, BMAD posted about him for adoption.

"We were approached by many families for adoption and this one really stood out."

Pattu had caught the eye of Pavlina Buskova from Czech Republic.

"She has had Doberman dogs all her life, had an admiration for the breed," explains Neeraja.

Pattu was flown from Chennai to Vienna in Austria with a stop at Dubai. From Vienna in Austria to Prague in Czech Republic the adopters themselves travelled with him on the road.

Says Neeraja: "We employed the



Pattu with Pavlina Buskova in the Czech Republic; and Momo with Dr. Shobana Balakrishnan in the United Kingdom.

services of 'Pawfly', a pet relocation service. This is our fifth international adoption with them. The adopters chose to take up the expenses."

Recently, a buoyant Pattu figured in a video Pavlina shared with BMAD.

Pattu must be just three years old, not a day over that, and he has already witnessed the duality of human nature with its capability for cruelty as well as compassion.

Another international adoption
Prior to finding Pattu a home abroad, BMAD had driven another adoption of similar proportion.

A labrador in a deplorable condition had been brought to BMAD.

Neeraja recounts the events: "Momo (a name the Labrador was given at BMAD) came to us on October 4, with swollen paws and she was too weak to walk and had severe tick infestation. Chitra, a regular rescuer and feeder, brought the Lab here. Despite coming from a humble background, Chitra and her husband Kannan, an auto driver, have helped many rescues around the city."

When she heard about Momo, Dr. Shobana Balakrishnan, a long-time donor of BMAD from the United Kingdom, had no doubt in her mind that this dog had to enrich her hearth. And it does enrich Dr. Shobana's hearth at Ashgrove Gardens in Edinburgh.



EVENTS

Finding purpose underwater

Archana Thiagarajan had a memorable time representing India at the World Championship in Japan; she set new Indian national records

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Archana Thiagarajan is now lolling around at her parents' home in Perungalathur, diving headlong into a world of delectable inactivity. She deserves the spot of relaxation she has found in a familiar environment.

Squadron Leader Archana (retd) is back from the 34th AIDA Freediving World Championship in Wakayama, Japan. She is the first woman to represent India at this championship, which will remain memorable not just for the afore-mentioned reason. The 33-year-old athlete set four new national records across all pool disciplines, making her a 10-time national record holder in freediving.

Her journey into freediving happened by chance during a sabbatical in Indonesia, after she completed a decade of service with the Indian Air Force as technical officer.

Taking notice of the accolades she had won at the national level representing Tamil Nadu, an instructor introduced her to freediving, the practice of diving underwater on a single breath without the use of a breathing apparatus.

In less than one-and-a-half years, Archana has proved discipline and determination can break barriers in any sport.

"Forty-nine countries and 234 participants were in the fray in this international event, and I was able to break the Indian national record in all the four

events that I took part in," says Archana.

Freediving is open to those aged above 18. Over the last six months, she has been preparing for the competition, training at Puducherry and Philippines as well as at pools in Chennai and Bangalore.

"Freediving is considered an extreme sport and you cannot train alone, so my husband has been a pillar of strength. He takes care of my safety," says Archana. She notes that her background in NCC and her stint with the Indian Air Force have helped her in the sport.

An avid yoga enthusiast, Archana says the sport emphasises relaxation, breath control and mental discipline over physical strength.

She adds, "To hold your breath for four minutes underwater, one would need considerable mind power. I have to stay calm; and overcoming these challenges related to the mind was possible with yoga."



Archana Thiagarajan at the World Championship in Wakayama, Japan.

Winners of contest on entrepreneurship receive awards



The award ceremony of an innovation and entrepreneurship competition organized by the Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute (EDII), a Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of Tamil Nadu, was held at Vivekananda Auditorium, Anna University, Guindy, last week.

According to a press release, the contest called "Tamil Nadu Student Innovators Challenge Programme," is an annual event held for government and government-aided school students with an aim to inculcate entrepreneurial skills in them.

The Minister for MSME, T.M. Anbarasan, presented cash award worth ₹31.25 lakh and certificates to 50 winning teams in the pre-

sence of the Additional Chief Secretary, MSME Department, Atul Anand; Director - EDII, R. Ambalavanan; and Deputy Director - EDII, N.A. Kamalakannan.

On the occasion, the Minister also launched an initiative called "Nimirntru Nil" for the benefit of students in higher education institutions; gave away financial assistance to the tune of ₹19.23 lakh to 15 enterprises under Innovation Voucher Programme; and inaugurated a skill development programme for which 9,000 beneficiaries from tier two and tier three cities have been identified, adds the release.

In his address, the Minister listed the various schemes and training programmes of the MSME Department.

A session on chocolate making

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a culinary workshop on making chocolates on July 24. According to a press release, various flavours of chocolates from cocoa, fruits and dry fruits would be demonstrated.

Another workshop on making fabric ornaments will be held on July 25. Both the sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required. For details, call 044 - 29530048.

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Inter school quiz competition

Union Christian Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Chetpet will host the 18th edition of the Rajan V. Chacko Memorial Inter School Quiz Competition for students of classes IX to XII on July 25. Hosted by renowned quiz master Berty Ashley, winners would get cash prizes. Calling all Chennai schools to register using the QR code on or before July 23.



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Bookworms Club to meet in Sholinganallur next Sunday

The fourth meeting of FOMRRA Bookworms Club would take place at The Central South Park Apartments in Sholinganallur at Old Mabalipuram Road (OMR) on the July 27 (between 3 pm and 6 pm).

To kick things, there would be two "Book Break Outs" where Ranjit Narayan will discuss two exciting new works by OMR-based authors that are making waves in the community, says a press release.

The Pallava Empire: A Gentle Introduction by Sripriya Srinivasan – a richly illustrated, accessible exploration of the ancient Pallava dynasty's legacy that recommends itself strongly to both history buffs and scholars. *Control The Shift* by Meera Rajagopalan – a compelling narrative that examines modern education through the eyes of a spirited middle grader navigating the contrasting worlds of government and private schooling.

Adding an interactive dimension to the day, the "Book Behind the Book" segment would feature a lively conversation with the authors about their journey to getting published. This candid discussion moderated by Shivani Dhulia will reveal the highs and lows, the truths behind the covers, and what it really takes to bring a story to life, the press release says. The event concludes with "Book Breakdowns", featuring an insightful discussion on Jeffrey Archer's timeless novel *Kane and Abel* moderated by Rohini Subramanian. Participants will delve into themes of ambition, rivalry, and destiny that span continents and generations, offering fresh perspectives on this classic. And the popular "Book Swap" makes its 17th appearance, inviting participants to exchange books, share stories, and discover new reads in this vibrant community tradition, the release adds.

Workshop on electric vehicle technology

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME, is conducting a workshop on electric vehicle technology and entrepreneurial opportunities in the sector on July 23 and 24 at its premises at SIDCO Industrial Estate, EDII Office Road, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. According to a press release, participants will learn about functioning of a motor, battery, charging systems, safety procedures, and servicing methods.

Prior registration is required. For details, call 9543773337 / 9360221280

Workshop on online marketing

Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute, a Department of MSME, is conducting a workshop on online marketing from July 29 to 31 at its premises at SIDCO Industrial Estate, EDII Office Road, Guindy. Time: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. According to a press release, the session will focus on creation of YouTube channel, website design techniques, its rules, and web hosting.

For details, call 9543773337 / 9360221280.

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