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DRIVEN BY A PURPOSE

Bookspace at CEEBROS Boulevard is for all age groups. But it is particularly alive to the need to reduce children's screen time. A close look at the community library as it is parked in its milestone tenth year **P5**



FORTY ENTREPRENEURS AT WOMEN'S BAZAAR

An annual initiative by C.P. Art Centre, the five-day exhibition opens on March 4 **P7**

CMRL work: 'new road' comes up near Lighthouse



CMRL has facilitated a new road near Lighthouse on Kamarajar Salai along Marina Beach. The new road has taken a bite out of the promenade. When Metro rail work shifts to another "slab" of the road, the newly-hewn bitumen-topped pathway will come into play hosting motorists. The images were taken on February 26. PHOTOS & TEXT: SRINATH M

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This **foot overbridge** at Peters Road is never put to work



The footbridge at Peters Road in Royapettah. PHOTOS AND TEXT: SRINATH M

Here is a spot-the-similarities challenge. What is common between Peters Road and Haddows Road? There would be a plethora of similarities for the acute-minded to spot. But for the superficial eye, there is one

similarity that is too glaringly obvious to be missed. It is the foot overbridge in both roads, strikingly similar in design; and even more striking is their dereliction of duty. The foot overbridge in both roads are out of work. The foot overbridge

at Peters Road, near New College, is more of a shirker “shirker”.

It sits on its haunches behind closed gates.

On inquiry, it was learnt that the foot overbridge is kept locked as it is misused at night whenever it is

open. That explanation does not cut ice. It would be more acceptable if it were kept open for public during the day and closed after dusk. Of course, the foot overbridge needs some maintenance – the rusty metal needs attention and a wild

growth of a tree should end – before it is offered to the public.

Both the footbridges date back to the time when Murasoli Maran was member of parliament and they were born out of funds allocated under MPLADS.

READERS WRITE



The rush hour traffic; and during another time of the day.



A bottleneck of a **subway**

This is a two-decades-old subway in Thiruvottiyur, near the Metro station, and as these photos show, it is really narrow for the volume of vehicles that hit the section.

During the morning rush hour – from 8.45 a.m. to 9.15 a.m. – the volume of traffic is so high that pedestrians find it difficult to walk safely. Motorists come from both directions and traffic blocks are common.

I have seen school students risking themselves by using the railway tracks to get to their destination during the rush hour. Some even needle their way between stationery goods trains to cross over to the other side.

The planning authorities must look at what can be done to improve check the chaos at this subway.

Yukendran Kamaraj
Thiruvottiyur

Increasing commercialisation of **residential areas**

With rapid urbanisation of the city, prime residential areas such as CIT Colony in Mylapore are witnessing growing commercialisation by restaurants, huge grocery chains, convention halls and BPOs. Most of these establishments do not have parking space.

Most of the businesses are operating in total violation of CMDA TNDRC 2019 guidelines on provision of parking space, thereby blocking public roads for their customers' parking.

We residents are facing the issues of illegal outsider cars being parked in front of our houses, double side parking, noise and waste pollution.



CMDA and GCC must not issue licence to such big commercial entities in primary residential areas which were never planned for such haphazard growth by the city's forefathers and planners.

Ramdas Naik
CIT Colony, Mylapore

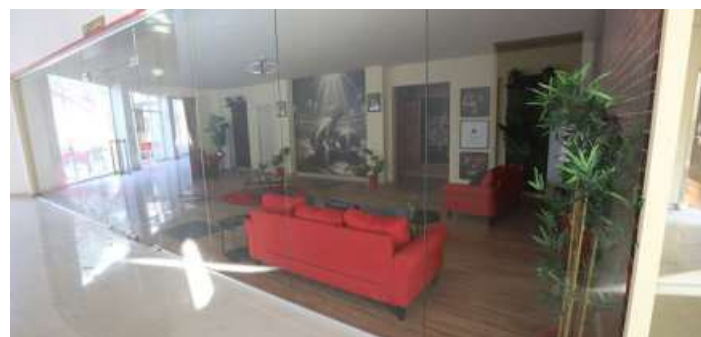
Indian Coast Guard conducts clean-up drive



The Indian Coast Guard's special coastal clean-up drive was held at Marina Beach recently. This was organised as part of Indian Coast Guard's 49th Rising Day. M.P. Amith, Regional Deputy Commissioner (South); Deputy Inspector General Satish Kumar were at the event.



New boxing academy: a look-in



▼
A quick tour of the Kalaingar Centenary Boxing Academy at Gopalapuram.
PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

The 'wait' ends at **Tidel Park junction**



▼
Traffic gridlock used to be the leitmotif of navigation through the Tidel Park junction, and the U-turn flyover with its free-flowing traffic movement seems to be just what the doctor ordered for this section. User experience has to be gauged. Towards that end, *The Hindu Downtown* seeks motorists' views on how effective the U-turn flyover is; and so write to us.
PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

'BookWorms' meetup on March 16

The Federation of OMR Residents Association (FOMRRA) conducts book-reading-and-discussion sessions as part of its reading club BookWorms. It also conducts Book Swap events, which enables residents to exchange books.

The next book reading session and book swap event will take place at *Basil With A Twist* Restaurant in Sholinganallur on OMR on March 16, 2025 (from 4 p.m. onwards).

The book that will come up for discussion at the book club meetup is *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

WHAT THEY SAY

'U-turns have increased on OMR'

It is too early to say if the new U-turn flyover on Rajiv Gandhi Salai has helped ease traffic. On February 26, during peak hours, the junction seemed to be witnessing easy-moving traffic. But that was a holiday due to Mahashivaratri so we have to wait and watch.

I go to IIT Madras and my office and home are both in Karapakkam, so I cannot avoid this stretch. Before the metro work started, I could reach Karapakkam in 30 minutes at most hours of the day. Now, it takes me 45-50 minutes. Ideally, I would like to leave home at 9 a.m. but then that would keep me longer on the road, so I leave after 10.30 a.m. These are some adjustments I have made to avoid getting caught in the traffic amidst Metro work. I find U-turns have increased on OMR and we need to see how they work.

Varsha Misra
Architect and Research Scholar

'I find the carriageway narrow'

I travel from Madhya Kailash to Taramani on work, and the first few days since the U-turn flyover at Tidel Park junction opened have been a disappointment for me. I find the width of the flyover to be narrow leading to congestion on the bridge. Previously buses from Thiruvannamipur would take a right turn at the signal to head towards Madhya Kailash; now they take the flyover to take a U-turn to move towards Madhya Kailash. Vehicles coming from Madhya Kailash to take a right turn at Taramani do not get enough space.

I need to take the right turn to head to Taramani, but because of the congestion on the bridge, I go straight towards SRP Tools and take the U-turn near NIFT. As of now the new flyover has not benefited me personally.

Lakshman Muthiah
Adyar

'More signboards are on the way'

Our experience says that any new U-turn takes 10-15 days for people to get accustomed to. Some are not aware there is a U-turn so creating awareness might be part of the package.

It is too early to give pat solutions. The section certainly looks better and navigating it is a lot easier. The average time spent at the junction has reduced drastically.

More signboards are definitely required to guide motorists better; and these signboards are on the way.

The Tidel park U-turn will facilitate greater movement of vehicles towards Ascendas IT Park, which has close to 20,000 employees working in the offices lodged there.

At Madhya Kailash junction, we had earlier implemented some changes which have motorists taking a compulsory left and then a U-turn. This has eased traffic movement at the Madhya Kailash junction.

Bandi Gangadhar
Joint Commissioner
(Traffic), South,
Greater Chennai Police



The reading room



MASOWN Library (2012) @ Mantri Synergy

In 2012, when the first residents piled into Mantri Synergy in Padur, the library also moved in. Deeming a library an essential feature of community living, not an add-on, a group of women put together efforts to create one. This library – the shelves sparse, but the intent rich – was the first brushstroke on the blank canvas of community engagement. While the shelves got busier with generous donations of books from residents, the library began to go beyond the hushed quiet of a reading space. The hours were now punctuated with practised pauses of storytelling sessions, and the deafening roar of victories being celebrated over board games.

Lalitha Sundaram, who moved into the community in 2017, and is hugely engaged with the functioning of the

library, sees the small table with a spread of puzzles and board games, as a tool aiding child development. “It is heartening to see children play in groups, learning to take turns and follow rules,” remarks Lalitha.

Giving a near-accurate figure, this library would have around 1500 books. Though the library thrives on book donations, the occasional purchase helps fill the gaps. Magazines in Malayalam and Telugu find their place alongside English novels. With the library expanding, the lack of a trained librarian was proving a thorn

in its side. The reliance on voluntary effort was skewed glaringly out of proportion. A newly appointed librarian, Ramya Johnson, now in the saddle, this problem has been addressed. It has eased the burden

on those like Purnima Shankar who is known for meticulously arranging books according to their genres.

MASOWN Library can be singled out for special mention just for its ambience. But that does not seem to be sufficient for the library to experience a steady patter of young feet. It is not as patronised by children and young adults as Lalitha would like it to be.

“Unfortunately, I have not noticed much change in reading habits among adolescents,” Lalitha admits in an almost defeated tone. But in a trice, she goes back to striking a positive note. Plans are under way to make the library more inviting, providing it with better lighting, more seating, and perhaps even adding an e-library component to it. Book talks, author interactions and storytelling sessions are on the horizon, with the hope of drawing more people in.



Lessons Learnt

1. Break the silence, make it lively
2. Do not delay hiring an expert
3. Find new ways to increase patronage

The IT Corridor in Chennai has its own annual literary festival, a thriving book reading club and regular book swap events. In addition, its gated communities are warming up to the idea of establishing reading nooks. Based on their experiences, a primer on how to start and sustain a community library

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Old Mahabalipuram Road has a close kinship with technology, as its monicker “IT Corridor” implies. Given the belief that physical books are losing out to technology, essentially screens, efforts in the OMR region to promote the former are bound to pique curiosity. Past the first look, that curiosity survives, in fact deepens. These efforts are not fitful; underneath them runs a leavening of deep intent. Here is compelling data. In 2024, the Federation of OMR Resident Associations (FOMRRA), which can speak for around 200 gated communities across OMR, launched OMR Litfest, essentially celebrating physical books. FOMRRA fosters an active book club, Bookworms. From footnotes in large community gatherings, FOMRRA’s “Book Swaps” have long risen to the dignity of standalone events. Even more irresistible is the move by gated communities to raise “book houses” within their cloistered environs. Recently, FOMRRA ran an informal survey of libraries at the gated communities in OMR rustling up a questionnaire in its WhatsApp group. It shared its findings with *The Hindu Downtown*: model community libraries exist on the IT Corridor. A good number of gated communities yet to invest in a full-fledged, modern community library are keen on doing so, but feel hampered by the lack of knowhow. Here are lessons from three community libraries on OMR, two established and the other barely out of the blocks, for any gated community anywhere that might want to add an effectively-run and much-patronised book house to its amenities.

Books & Beyond (2025) @ Jains Pebble Brook

Books & Beyond, the library at Jains Pebble Brook in Thoraipakkam, let out its first shrill cry as recently as January 2025. The baby might be a bit wobbly on its feet, but its eyes are fixed firm on the goals, its vision precociously sharpened by “early training”. It is not only up and running, but running in the right direction, taking a digital route straightaway. As Praveen Kumar P.S., among the avid book lovers at Jains Pebble Brook who are steering the initiative powered by its Association’s managing committee, explains: “With the Librarika app in place, members can browse the catalogue online, note the book’s accession number, locate it on the rack, check it out, and be on their way – all within a minute.”

Hooked on Books at TCPS in Sholinganalur is a heavyweight among community libraries and tapping into their expertise was a just a request and six kilometres away. That request was made and that distance covered. Praveen notes the library building team at Jains Pebble Brook found support in the wisdom shared by their counterparts in TPSC, and slowly pieced together the blueprint for their

own version of a reading haven. He adds they took a leaf or two out of Murgan Learning Library (a commercial entity) as well.

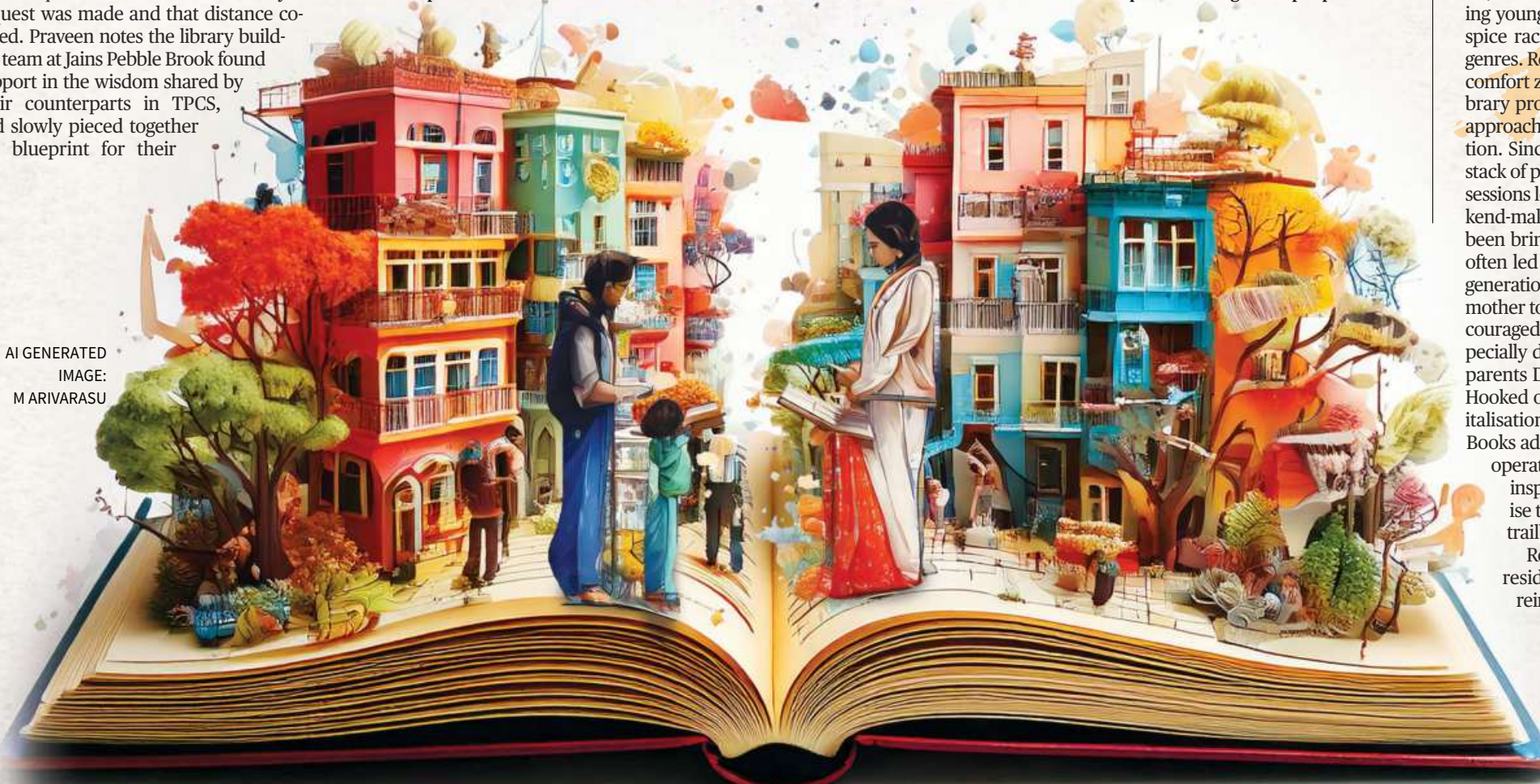
The room allotted for the library was of restricted dimensions, nor did it boast any remarkable interiors. On hindsight, these were needless concerns. The shelves are populated by 347 titles with something on tap for every age group; there is room for hundreds of titles to join in. With proper planning of space, any room is always more expansive than it seems at first sight. Children did not notice the lacklustre interiors; they have taken to the library: small groups of children wander in, curious eyes scanning the shelves. Conversations sparked by books are

beginning to weave new threads into the community’s social fabric. Praveen recalls a couple of memorable moments – a senior resident finding a rare book he had not seen in ages and gushing over the find; and a retired headmaster volunteering to conduct storytelling sessions. Books & Beyond has storytelling sessions, book clubs and writing workshops on the horizon.

Lessons learnt

1. Digitalise the system straightaway
2. Seek out the experts
3. Space is never a constraint
4. Do not judge a book by its cover

AI GENERATED
IMAGE:
M ARIVARASU



Lessons Learnt

1. A library should not be an afterthought
2. A library belongs to every resident
3. Aim at a staggeringly diverse collection
4. Launch reading challenges; run campaigns
5. Ensure continuous process improvement
6. Create space regularly for new titles
7. Ensure knowledge transfer



Hooked on Books (2012) @ The Central Park South

The idea of establishing a library took root even before this apartment, The Central Park South (TCPS) in Sholinganalur, was fully built, with one room thoughtfully kept salted away for this purpose. The library’s founding members scoured local markets for books, cherry-picking the titles that would line the shelves. Residents pitched in with book donations, slowly transforming the space into a treasure chest of stories. Each book added was tantamount to a seed planted; and over time, the collection flourished into a garden of knowledge. Today, Hooked on Books, as the library is called, is viewed as a benchmark for community-serving reading facilities.

The library has thrived on the goodwill of its residents, winning steadfast volunteers (Aruna Venkateswaran, Poornima Surianarayanan and Supriya Santhanam, to name a few) who have made a difference. Aruna, who joined the community in 2017, says with a smile: “Anyone can volunteer to open the library. That is what makes it special – it belongs to everyone.”

Hooked on Books ticks the box for diversity many times over. The children’s section is a vibrant tapestry of imagination, holding 1,400 books across reading levels (L0 to L5), 700 young fiction titles, and 90 young adult fiction books – a total of 2,200 books fuelling young minds. The adult section resembles a carefully curated spice rack, offering 575 fiction and 800 non-fiction titles across genres. Reading challenges (not contests) nudge readers out of their comfort zones; any child who completes a challenge will find the library procuring the books in their wishlist for them to read. This approach makes the journey of reading as delightful as the destination. Since its beginning in 2012, Hooked on Books has had a full stack of programmes: reading challenges, library bingo, storytelling sessions led by different age groups, book-based treasure hunt, bookend-making sessions and themed art workshops. The library has been bringing multiple generations together. Storytelling sessions, often led by senior residents or parents, become moments where generations connect, with stories passed down in both English and mother tongues, adding layers of cultural richness. Children are encouraged to borrow books for their parents and grandparents, especially during special occasions such as Mother’s Day and Grandparents Day. Poornima Surianarayanan is credited with wheeling Hooked on Books into the digital realm, assiduously achieving digitalisation of library processes. During the pandemic, Hooked on Books adopted the Librarika app and with this digital leap, kept its operations running with state-mandated restrictions. This move inspired neighbouring communities to follow suit and digitalise their library operations, further solidifying TCPS’s role as a trailblazer in community reading initiatives.

Regular decluttering book sales by Hooked on Books allow residents to purchase books at nominal rates, with proceeds reinvested in fresh titles.

Association president Rakesh Ohri’s leadership style giving successive in-charges of the library a free run, the expertise has been consistently built, and even when someone relocates to a different address, the baton is passed effectively – as was the case when Supriya Santhanam, who had contributed immensely to the library’s development, left for Bengaluru.

Driven by a purpose

Bookspace at CEEBROS Boulevard is for all age groups. But it is particularly alive to the need to reduce children’s screen time. A close look at the community library as it is parked in its milestone tenth year

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

The library at CEEBROS Boulevard in Thoraipakkam bears a name that almost gives away a recondite information, an information lodged largely with those who have seen the facility assume the character it now flaunts. Bookspace, as the library is called, was forged in a space glaringly atypical of a reading room. It was something of a by-place, seemingly built just for the purpose of being rudely ignored. The first thing one noticed about this ill-lit, uninviting room was how it hosted drainage pipes and electrical wiring, celebrating them as one would a childhood buddy who shows up after time immemorial. Viewed in the glow of this backstory, the name Bookspace seems bent on erasing the space’s rather lacklustre past, doesn’t it? It actually need not try that hard: since its birth in 2015 (with the space smartened up beyond belief), its processes have left nobody in any doubt about what it is – a delectable space for books and even community, particularly for its young residents.

Not too far from its milestone 10th year celebration, Bookspace is grappling with the questions that interest and plague every other community library – how to ensure it stays relevant to the younger generations in the community?

The library’s design makes one objective stand out like an obese tome among thin-as-air booklets: getting children to reduce screen time. The library sports a dedicated children’s section with tables and chairs encouraging young readers to not scoot after borrowing a book, but stay put and read it on-site.

“Books can shape young minds, but it is the space and conversations around them that create lasting memories,” says Shyamala.

Shyamala observes that while children aged up to 13 are a regular presence at Bookspace, older children are a rarity. The latter drift away due to increasing screen time.

There has been an episode in Bookspace’s history when children and young adults stepped up to keep its operations running – yes, you have read that right. It happened when the community faced difficulties in appointing a permanent librarian. In response, residents – including children aged 12 and above and young adults – volunteered to take on librarian du-



At Bookspace

ties. Initially, adults intended to manage the library themselves. However, the unexpected enthusiasm from children, teenagers and young adults prompted a more inclusive approach. A message seeking volunteers was posted on the community forum, resulting in six to seven teenagers and four to five young adults stepping forward. The system remains in place, with young volunteers filling in whenever the current librarian, a college student, is unavailable due to academic commitments, Shyamala points out. Volunteers such as Dhana Raghavan, Ragini Raj and Shyamala have made sure the library is promoted as a creative hub, particularly for children and young adults. A Book Club that meets every Friday has on its bill of fare, storytelling sessions, book narrations and even games structured around the printed word. Even more for the benefit of young readers, every four to five months, the library organises quiz, drawing, painting and essay writing contests.

In addition to having a library that is alive to the aspirations of the young, the community previously published a monthly newsletter titled *Boulevard Buzz*. Curated by young residents under the editorial guidance of Ragini Raj, the newsletter featured poems, short stories, narratives and profiles of residents who have managed notable achievements. Contributions flew in from children aged six to 18, with one teenage girl serving as the acting editor. The initiative ceased on account of the pandemic due to a lack of volunteers, though there are plans to revive it.

Looking ahead, Bookspace aims to introduce audiobook sessions but remains committed to encouraging interactions with physical books. They plan to host projector-based storytelling sessions where volunteers read and explain stories to children, fostering a sense of community and learning.



Meet Miranda Tomkinson, a deafblind lecturer with multiple postgraduate degrees, who recently received the Cavinkare Ability Award

A vision for a better future

LIFFY THOMAS

What does it mean to be a lecturer without vision and hearing? Interviewing 45-five-year-old Miranda Tomkinson, who recently was among the awardees at the 23rd edition of the Cavinkare Ability Awards, was a humbling experience for this journalist.

Miranda Tomkinson is a lecturer (on contract) in the Department of Special Education at National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), taking classes for diploma, B.Ed and M.Ed courses with a majority of the class being populated by able-bodied students.

Miranda speaks fluent English but cannot hear. He is independent and uses public transport for the commute to his workspace in Mutukadu on East Coast Road from his home in Kottivakkam.

Miranda navigates the world of communication with special tools, which include a "refreshable braille" that helps him with text messages, and quick application of mind in sticky situations. While on the telephone with him, he would not want the one on the other side of the line to speak as he can only hear vibrations when someone is talking. If the person wanted to say something, he would want them to type in the message. He could however respond to the message by speaking over a voice call.

Miranda's story is one of sheer

grit. He was born blind and found difficulty in hearing during his middle-school days.

"Teachers those days were not trained to handle students like me but I was good at studies," says Miranda, adding that his father was deafblind like him.

A happy-go-lucky youth who loved adventures, Miranda studied sociology at Loyola College following which he went on to pursue a B.Ed programme.

"That is when I realised that my hearing loss had gone from bad to worse and I could not listen to lecturers in class," he recalls.

Miranda switched to distance learning but that also was not easy. "I studied public administration but took five years to complete it as I used human readers to help me with subjects. It was a struggle with technology use not being so prevalent back then," he says.

Search for a job

Then came the challenge in finding jobs. NIEPMD faculty members helped by connecting him to factories but when that was not successful they encouraged him to pursue a masters programme in education (M.Ed) in special education in multiple disabilities. They would help him by getting copies of the notes and converting it into Braille.

Miranda holds three postgrad-

uate degrees and has cleared the UGC NET exams in Sociology and Education.

In 2013, *The Hindu* wrote about the protracted battle Miranda fought to get a question paper in Braille for an examination conducted by University Grants Commission.

A host of representations to the UGC, an RTI and a case in the Madras High Court paved way for this victory.

However, because of the delay in this case, he lost a fellowship.

"I was also selected for Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) but it turned out to be of little use as I had reached the upper limit," he says.

The pandemic years were a real struggle for Miranda as he was without work and faced isolation

and social distancing.

"I developed a lot of skills because of the challenges I faced, each giving me an opportunity to learn," says Miranda who dabbles in poetry during his free time.

"In 2022, NIEPMD took me back as a lecturer on a contract basis," he says.

New teaching methods

With the support of his wife, Miranda has been adopting new teaching



I developed a lot of skills because of the challenges I faced, each giving me an opportunity to learn

methods. Through his blog, YouTube channel, and upcoming book, Miranda advocates for greater inclusion and awareness for individuals with deafblindness and multiple disabilities.

Miranda's wife Remy Vinutha, who works in the field of rehabilitation, is overjoyed with this award by Ability Foundation. "Many people questioned my choice when I married Miranda, who was diagnosed with Usher Syndrome, so a honour for him is a recognition to me as well," Remy says, adding how she has been helping him reach a larger audience through his YouTube channel.

Miranda has been advocating for greater inclusion and awareness for individuals with deafblindness and multiple disabilities through different mediums including books, one on inclusion of deafblind in higher education. "I am working on a book that will feature extraordinary persons with disabilities in India, so I want to collect such success stories," he says.

The lecturer wants to become an author like Helen Keller. "The United States supported Helen Keller. Who will support me?" he asks.

As of now the director and faculty at NIEPMD have been supporting Miranda in many ways including pushing for the four percentage reservation in government jobs for persons with disability to be implemented so that Miranda would at some point get a permanent job.

K. Balabaskar, a lecturer in Adult Independent Living at NIEPMD, says Miranda has come a long way by virtue of his perseverance and resilience. "For persons with multiple disabilities to grow it is equally important that society extends them compassion," says Balabaskar.



(Clockwise from top left) Miranda Tomkinson receives the Cavinkare Ability Mastery Award; in the classroom; and with wife Remy Vinutha. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Forty entrepreneurs at Women's Bazaar

An annual initiative by C.P. Art Centre, the five-day exhibition opens on March 4

C.P. Art Centre is gearing up for its annual festival - an exhibition of arts, crafts, textiles and food items made and marketed by women entrepreneurs.

This is the 32nd year of the Women's Bazaar organised by C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation to provide a platform for women to sell their products.

Since 1994, to celebrate International Women's Day, C.P. Art Centre has been organising this annual exhibition, said a release.

It started with half-a-dozen wo-



From a previous edition

men entrepreneurs that later multiplied over the years.

Items displayed include jewel-
leries; craft items such as jute,

Chettinad, kurumba, glass paint-
ings, hand bags and purses; textiles
such as saris, salwar kameez, chan-
deri, Bengal cotton, khadi and ma-

ny more. The women belong to a
variety of backgrounds: from rural
areas, from Chennai's hutments
and middle class women. They are

self-employed, employ other wo-
men and market goods made by
women. The potential of the entre-
preneurs varies from pottery to
pickle making to weaving and gar-
ment manufacturing.

More than 40 women's groups
are participating this year. All pro-
ceeds from the sales go to the wo-
men or the women's organisations,
which include Women's India As-
sociation (WIA), NAAM Founda-
tion, Porgai Artisans Association -
Lambadi community from Tamil-
nadu, Thoorigai Grama Pengal
Kootamaippu, Trichy and those
supported by the C.P. Ramaswami
Aiyar Foundation, added the re-
lease. All expenses are covered by
C.P. Art Centre.

Justice Prabha Sridevan (re-
tired), former judge of the Madras
High Court, will inaugurate the ex-
hibition on March 4, 2025, at 11
a.m.

The exhibition and sale will take
place in the Main, Mini I and Mini II
galleries of C.P. Art Centre, 1, El-
dams Road, Alwarpet from March 4
to 9, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

NEIGHBOURHOOD BUZZ

Alumnae Association organises eye screening camp

The Alumnae Association of Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women hosted an outreach program, "Roshini - An Exclusive Eye Screening for Parents," in collaboration with Dr. Agarwal Eye Hospital on February 22.

Amthul Azeez, Principal and Cor-
respondent, welcomed the gather-
ing. Dr. Athiya Agarwal, an alumna
from the 1975 batch and Director of
Dr. Agarwal Eye Hospital, coordinat-
ed the event.

Dr. Jeyaprabha Selvararaj, Consul-
tant Ophthalmologist, delivered an
awareness talk on the importance of
eye care and early treatment for
healthy vision. Dr. Sudha, Director of
Dr. Agarwal Eye Hospital, and Dr.
Jeyaprabha Selvararaj were the guests
of honour.

The event concluded with a vote of
thanks by Rayeesunnisa, Joint Secre-
tary of the Alumnae Association.

International conference conducted



Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College in Broadway hosted a week-
long multi-disciplinary international conference on contemporary social is-
sues. The event was held in Sri Lanka and India. Experts from Sri Lanka from
various disciplines and from other parts of the country shared their expertise
in their domain. The Inner Wheel District 323 sponsored the event along with
the management of Sri Kanyaka Parameswari College, said a release.

Title conferred on nonagenarian

Naadabrahmam United Gyan Academi (NUGA) celebrated Maha Shivaratri
festival recently. On the occasion, Naadhabrahmam honoured 92-year-old
Odhuvur Kudanthai Lakshmanan with the title "Naadha Padhika Sevaka".
This was conferred by S.Vaidhyanathan, retired Chief Judge, Megalaya High
Court. Also present on the occasion were N.Subramanian, founder of
Naadhabrahmam and honorary secretary Badrinarayanan, said a release.

Maharashtra Association organises cultural festival

The Maharashtra Association Chennai celebrated Sri Samar-
tha Ramdas Navami on February 23 by organising a cultural
festival at Sanskrit College auditorium in Mylapore. Veera Ven-
katesa Bhajan Mandali from Mangalore and Sreeranjane
Kaushik from Chennai rendered Marathi abhangs. Sreeranjane
was honoured with the title "Bhajana Bhushan".

Chief guest was G. Srinivas Mallya, a prominent bhajani and
founder of Bhajanamrutha (extreme left in picture) took part.



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A picture of belligerence



Two Wood sandpipers strike a belligerent pose, standing tip-toe as they square off against each other at the Perumbakkam wetland. When two entities eye the same "supper plate", skirmishes can be expected. There was more "bark" than "bite" in this tussle with both birds posturing through the entire length of the face-off, just warning each other off what they took into their brain as their turf. Among the sandpipers, the wood sandpiper is generally believed to display an added degree of territoriality, usually visiting their wrath on one of their own. Posturing and display of aggression can take various forms depending on the feathers orchestrating it. The image of the bellicose Wood sandpipers was taken in February, 2025. Birder E. Arun Kumar remarks that the Greater painted snipe, particularly the male, postures to warn off intruders (birds of other species) by raising one wing. As with the Bronze-winged jacanas, the male bird in this species is entrusted with parental duty and a male Greater painted snipe with chicks to protect is likely to resort to this posturing behaviour when it perceives a threat to the young ones. Arun Kumar has watched Greater painted snipes display this behaviour at Karapakkam, on a patch lying immediately outside the Pallikaranai Marsh; and he shot this photo there. Photos: Prince Frederick & E. Arun Kumar.

An *inspiring* story
from the track

On February 20, Nithya made everyone proud at Nehru Stadium, especially the Sri Arunodayam's family by winning a silver medal in long jump at the 23rd National Para Athletics Championship. The Kolathur-based NGO provides care for abandoned children with intellectual disabilities (ID), and Nithya joined them when she was 14 after being abandoned.

Nithya's story is one of resilience, providing hope for children with intellectual disabilities, says a communication from Sri Arunodayam. The turning point for Nithya came through Prayatna, the in-house vocational training centre. Within its walls, she discovered hidden talents and a passion for creating that blossomed into beautiful expressions of herself.

But Nithya's spirit yearned for more than just creation. She possessed a desire to care for others. This led her to pursue nursing. Prayatna paved the way, facilitating



her enrolment at ANEW.

Now a qualified caregiver, 22-year-old Nithya brings her skills to the home. She tends to our children with gentle hands and assists our medical team with quiet efficiency, says the communication.

Nithya is a force of nature on the sports field. Since her debut in

Youngster from a shelter home wins a silver medal at the recent National Para Athletics Championship



Nithya recently received her prize money from Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin.

2022, she is been a whirlwind of talent and determination.

A star on the track

On February 27, 2022, she blazed across the finish line, winning gold in the 100-meter dash at the Chief

Minister's Trophy District Level Competition for the differently-abled, accomplishing a victory against more than 300 children from 50 schools.

On July 17, she won the Chief Minister's Trophy State Level Com-

petition at the Physical Education University, Kelambakkam, earning another gold and a whopping ₹1,00,000. That same year, at the 15th-Year Sports Meet for Children with Special Needs, Nithya and her teammates shone brightly. Among 620 children from 36 schools, our children brought home a staggering 18 medals (13 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze), the communication notes. In 2024, Nithya continued her winning streak, grabbing gold in the 100m at the District Level Chief Minister's Trophy.

She has now set her eyes on the International Paralympics. Through Prayatna, she has channeled her energy and blossomed into a multi-talented young woman - a tailor, dancer, nurse and a sports champion.

The team

Madhavi, Nithya's teacher, played a pivotal role, nurturing her talent and guiding her every step of the way. And Guna and Pandi, her coaches, also deserve mention.

Along with Nithya, Akshaya, Shantha and Arul also won medals at the 23rd National Para Athletics Championship, the communication adds.