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'Old SWD fails again'

While the December 2 images of Perambur High Road — North might be a shocker to the outside world, they are source of continuing frustration for residents. They flay GCC for the delay in SWD reconstruction work despite the contract being awarded

L. KANTHIMATHI

Had Greater Chennai Corporation executed its plan to construct a new stormwater drain on Perambur High Road - North, the road would not have witnessed waterlogging this rainy season, notes Perambur Neighbourhood Development Forum, a citizens group which has been seeking reconstruction of SWD on Perambur High Road for the past five years.

"Year after year, the road witnesses heavy inundation and it takes a few days for the water to recede. Because the existing stormwater drain which is decades-old is

in a deplorable state and hence serves no purpose. We were hopeful there will be no inundation this rainy season. But in spite of awarding the contract is a thorough disappointment. A lot of beautification and aesthetic works are being carried out in and around Perambur under North Chennai Development Scheme. GCC should have prioritised SWD reconstruction on this road which is an essential exercise over beautification works. Now, it is the public who suffer," says Raghukumar Choodamani, the forum's convenor.

The citizen forum also flays GCC for constructing stainless steel handrails a few months ago on a

section of the existing stormwater drain, that is from the bus terminus to the railway station.

"The stormwater drain doubles as a footpath. While there is a plan to demolish the existing SWD and reconstruct a new one why did GCC wasted the taxpayers money by constructing handrails?" says Raghukumar.

A Greater Chennai Corporation official says the work will begin by January next year.

"It is a ₹4.8 crore project and will take nine months for completion. The SWD reconstruction got delayed because CMWSSB was carrying out its work," says the official.



Perambur High Road - North on December 2, 2025.
PHOTO: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

'Waterlogging near Thirumangalam metro railway station'

S. SANKARANARAYANAN

The section of Second Avenue near Thirumangalam metro railway station witnesses severe waterlogging during a heavy downpour. Therefore, the public, especially commuters waiting at the bus stop in front of the railway station are put to a lot of inconvenience. Buses heading toward Ambattur, Mogappair and Avadi halt at this stop. Besides, share autorickshaws waiting for customers in front of the railway station aggravate the problem.

S. Sankaranarayanan is a resident of Anna Nagar



Second Avenue near Thirumangalam metro railway station on December 3, 2025.



The subway on December 5, 2025. PHOTOS: UMESH KUMAR . V

'Reopened after repair work, waterlogging recurs at subway'

RAGHKUMAR CHOODAMANI

On account of the recent rains, the pedestrian subway at Perambur Locoworks railway station has been rendered unusable again. It may be noted the subway was reopened sometime during the early part of this year after repairs were carried out to address the issue of waterlogging.

The recurrence of water stagnation at the subway questions the quality of the repair work.

Perambur Neighbourhood Development Forum observed various flaws in the subway after the repair work and it expected the recurrence of water stagnation.

Various stations in Chennai Division of the Southern Railway are undergoing redevelopment and renovation. But nothing is being done to ensure safety of the commuters at Locoworks station in Perambur. It is difficult to walk over the stones which are part of the track and hence one cannot cross swiftly.

This subway is hardly used ever since it was opened in 2021 because it is under water for most part of the year.

Raghukumar Choodamani, convenor, Perambur Neighbourhood Development Forum



'Key road at SIDCO Nagar needs patchwork'

M. SENTHIL

Fourth Main Road at SIDCO Nagar in Villivakkam is marked with potholes and hence witnesses waterlogging following the recent rains, especially the part of the road at 15th Street junction and at First Main Road junction.

Stormwater drain work got completed a month ago. But, the electricity department dug up the road again in a week. In the case of First Main Road junction, the electricity department is carrying out its work.

In spite of repeated complaints even patchwork was not carried out. It may also be noted that lighting facility is poor on Fourth Main Road.

M. Senthil,
Villivakkam

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'Nelson Manickam Road subway is unsafe'



The subway on Nelson Manickam Road. PHOTO: PRABHU .M

KAMAL JOSHUA

The subway on Nelson Manickam Road was waterlogged following the recent rains. However, water seepage from the walls will continue even after the rains.

This is the status any time of the year, including summer. Further, the road is bat-

tered. All these make the subway unsafe for motorcyclists. Therefore, Greater Chennai Corporation should carry out a proper repair work aimed at providing a lasting solution. If feasible, the subway should be widened. Because this subway witnesses heavy traffic as it provides connectivity to Anna Nagar and T Nagar.

Kamal Joshua is resident of Chetpet



THE MAKING OF NEURODIVERGENT ARTISTS

Around the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, tracking the workday trajectory of three organisations in Chennai that promote artistic creativity among children and young adults with special needs. **P2**



TWO BOYS DOCUMENT RARE BIRD

Madras Naturalists Society members and school-going children from Chennai, Amogh Vjay Chatty and Aaditya S Rajesh spot and photograph a Plaintive cuckoo, which is a vagrant in south India. **P4**

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Around the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), tracking the workaday trajectory of three organisations in Chennai, two of which foster artistic creativity among children and young adults with special needs. And the third one brings saleability to their artworks



The making of neurodivergent artists

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

The drip paint mug can walk straight into any upscale showroom that sells art-based utilitarian items, and plonk itself in the display. It would not be stopped at the door. It would make a great corporate gift. The design of paint frozen in an act of dripping underlines such meticulous calculation and skill that it can be the subject of a design lecture at a fine arts college. This artist had designed this mug exclusively for The Indian Twist which makes a variety of items that solemnise a marriage between artistic and utilitarian value. And there is a factor adding greater value to it. The artist is Rupak Munje. A name readily recognised, Rupak is a poster boy for art by the neurodivergent, art that can share display space with art of the highest water from the neurotypical. While in the business of making and selling these products, The Indian Twist is simultaneously in the process of making Rupaks. It supports art by the neurodivergent.

The Chennai-based company (@theindiantwist) sells online thereby surmounting the geographical barrier to commerce. Here is a quick run of their product line – a variety of bags, cushion covers, coffee mugs, beer mugs, coasters, notebooks, artisanal fabric gift envelopes, calendars, mini photo albums, aprons, fridge magnets, paper weights, wine bags and so on. There is a quirkiness to how these everyday things are designed.

The design team at The Indian Twist works on the spontaneous artworks by children and young adults from A Brush With Art (@abwa_chennai) and The CanBridge Academy (@thecanbridgeacademy), works them into its product line, thereby transforms these artworks into a state of saleability. The CanBridge Academy provides life skill training to young adults with autism. And ABWA promotes “ex-



pression of natural art in children with special needs”.

At The Indian Twist, the production process also supports women in shelter homes who stitch bags, earning income and gaining confidence. The residents of The Banyan (India) have a hand in some of the products designed by The Indian Twist.

Shuba Kuila, founder of The Indian Twist, notes that the final product does not obfuscate the artist's authentic expression. For Shuba, a part of this creative work is the creation of joy. The fulfilment derives partly from the children's delight that is evident when they spot their creations on display at events, pressing them to their chests with pride.

Shuba observes that The Indian Twist's approach emphasises merit over charity, ensuring that neurodivergent artists are valued for their creativity and aesthetic con-



tribution, not their circumstances.

Here is a peek into how these artists are made at the organisations associated with The Indian twist.



A drip paint mug, a calendar and a bag made by The Indian Twist with the help of neurodivergent artists; from the 'drawing board' at A Brush With Art and The CanBridge Academy.



Mala Chinnappa, mother of a neurodivergent adult and a long time facilitator at A Brush With Art, begins “When a child first comes in, we begin with dry mediums like crayons. Fluid mediums can overstimulate. We simply watch them. They realise this is not a class. They are free to do what they want.”

The art sessions are structured around agency. One child draws buses with architectural precision but omits the driver every time. “Human beings disrupt his grid,” she explains. “So he edits them out.” Another covers sheets with a single colour until the page becomes an uninterrupted field. Some cut paper with near mathematical accuracy. Others tear it rhythmically, almost as a form of sensory release. These are data points about how each child pro-

cesses the world. Over months, she observes measurable changes. Sitting tolerance expands from ten minutes to over forty. Colour choices shift from impulsive to deliberate. Compositions gain structure. Impulsivity reduces. Confidence becomes observable rather than assumed.

At The CanBridge Academy, co-founder Kavitha Krishnamoorthy has worked with many neurodivergent individuals across ages. Patterns, she says, are often their preferred language. Visual patterns, musical rhythms, repetitive motions are not signs of monotony but anchors for regulation.

“Even finger painting becomes movement,” she explains. “Sweeps, arcs, repetitions. Their body leads the art, not the other way around.”

She cautions against reading emotions through colour choices, an interpretation common in neurotypical frameworks but inaccurate here. Emotional communication is frequently physical rather than symbolic. A child who arrives distressed may pound clay until his system stabilises. A young adult plays a xylophone with rapid beats when excited and slow, spaced notes when low. Emotion is expressed through speed, pressure, repetition, and bodily rhythm.

Contrary to stereotypes, attention is rarely the concern. What disrupts focus is not the child but the instruction. “They focus intensely,” she says. “The problem begins only when adults impose structure or when the task becomes monotonous.”

Across weeks and months, the changes are consistent. Restlessness diminishes. Emotional regulation improves. Trust widens. Independence builds. Over time, a recognisable artistic identity emerges, not shaped by imitation but by sensory accuracy.

ENVIRONMENT

The monsoon brings life to our gardens, but can also leave compost bins waterlogged and messy.
Residents on how not to compost during the monsoon

Rainy season demands smarter composting

LIFFY THOMAS

'Do not give any chance for water to enter the bins'

The adoption of waste management initiatives in a community depends on how they are implemented, perceived and sustained. That is lesson from The Summit, a 30-flat apartment complex at 1st Avenue in Sastri Nagar, Adyar.

In 2019, Latha Mahalingam spearheaded an initiative to ensure no wet waste leaves the gates of the apartment by persuading the association to invest in *in-situ* composting.

"It was around the same time that Greater Chennai Corporation was insisting that communities (those that came under the bulk waste generator category) take care of the waste they generated, so that gave a huge impetus to my campaign," says Latha, secretary of The Summit Apartment Owners Association.

After carrying out a study of apartments in Adyar where composting was adopted, two 800-litre My Green Bins were bought to the community. From flyers to messages on the WhatsApp group, segregation of waste was emphasised strongly. The housekeeping team was trained on steps they needed to take once waste was collected.

The community has been religiously composting waste; even during pandemic and heavy rains they never gave the bins a rest.

The apartment is at a higher level than the road, so even during floods they never faced an issue. The bins on wheels are kept at a height, ensuring no water enters them.

Latha says regular maintenance and follow-up are reasons the initiative is still going strong. The compost bins are cleaned after every cycle.

During monsoon, The Summit's housekeeping team ensures the harvested compost is used. "Earlier we used to take it to the terrace and dry it. Now, we empty it directly on the ground or give it to the plants," she says.

Another golden rule they follow is ensuring the lid is closed tight and giving no scope for water to enter. The bins do not even have a roof over their head.

"Now I have relinquished my position from this and the facility manager, Chenniangiri K takes care of everything. It about setting every in place for the right culture to set in," she says.

'Used mud pots can do wonders'



'We make sure water does not stagnate in compost pits'



For Deephika S. and her extended family residing in Perambur, composting during monsoon does not pose any additional challenge due to various strategies they have adopted over the years.

Besides the kitchen waste that is generated from the independent house, the family composts dog poop from its two pets and vegetable waste received from two pushcart vendors who conduct business in the area.

A 4x2 feet pit dug on the ground and closed with a wooden plank serves as the bigger compost pit, but this is only put to use when the mud flower pots, six to seven of them, that are used as compost 'bin' are full.

"During rains, we ensure there is no soil erosion from the pots so an extra layer of soil is added," says Deepika, a Chartered Accountant by profession.

The family's experience from their own backyard shows that composting is quicker during monsoon as long as there is no water stagnation. "Moisture is a friend of compost-

ing, so the process happens as in other seasons; only that we need to ensure the right balance," she says. On slightly sunny days, remove the cover to let the compost breathe. Proper aeration prevents the compost from becoming soggy and supports effective decomposition. The family members also ensure the drainage holes in the compost bin are clear to let excess water escape.

This prevents the compost from becoming soggy. The pots are under a shade and layered with cocoa peat and kept for breakdown. "We did not find much success with ready-made bins sold in the market, which sometimes leaves behind a smell. I find the red pot the best bet for composting as it has a lot of moisture content and air circulation is also good," says Deepika adding that they grow a variety of greens, brinjal, tomatoes and lemon. The 'black gold' generated after a month goes back to their own plants. "We noticed the quality of compost being good when it is made with fruits and vegetable waste alone," she says.

'Maintain the right ratio'

One key factor to keep in mind while composting this time of the year is to ensure carbon and nitrogen ratio is 30:1. Most of the waste that

we generate at home contains more of carbon, so add nitrogen supplement either through cow dung slurry or urea (depending on the kind of composting you are following). If your site is in an open space, ensure it is covered but do leave it open at times when it is slightly sunny. Smell is a challenge most people complain during monsoon,

so make sure there is no water stagnation as leachate leaves a foul smell.

Having a compost heap of one metre height is ideal to kill pathogens and it helps in the decomposing process.

E. Parameswari
professor in
Environmental Science,
Tamil Nadu Agriculture
University

Madras Naturalists Society members and school-going children from Chennai, Amoggh Vjay Chatty and Aaditya S Rajesh spot and photograph a Plaintive cuckoo, which is a vagrant in south India



Two boys document rare bird

PRINCE FREDERICK

No rap on the knuckles probably for Amoggh Vjay Chatty if caught talking with his classmates while seated at his flip-top desk and the teacher is scrawling on the board. After all, he was born "Chatty". The human world might be forgiving if Amoggh uttered a word where silence is demanded, his unmissable surname coming to his rescue, making light of the situation, but the wild would not. The Grade 10 student of PSBB Millennium school in Semmancherry obviously has to shush himself while in the bush looking for birds, which he does in his leisure with two other Chattys – parents Sriram Chatty and Radhika Chatty.

On November 30, the three Chattys were looking for birds far from their hearth. The destination was the sprawling Odiyur lake on East Coast Road (near Paramankeni) on the way to Puducherry. The birding group was actually larger

with a non-Chatty in it. And the day ended up belonging to one of the Chattys – Amoggh – and the non-Chatty, Aaditya S Rajesh. The senior Chattys had their wheels all to themselves. Being peers Amoggh (15) and Aaditya (16) had flocked together in another set of wheels, a car driven by Aaditya's uncle. Aaditya wears uniform different from Amoggh's to school, studying in Grade 11 at Maharishi Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary school in Chetpet. During weekends, the boys have a common uniform, birding camouflage fatigues. Both Aaditya are members of Madras Naturalists Society and introduced early to birding by their families.

The purpose of the visit to Odiyur lake was to watch pelagic birds. Amid the repeating patterns of life are plans re-scripting themselves, throwing up highlights diametrically opposite to what was foreseen. And one needs to be thankful for that. Amoggh and Aaditya are. There were sightings of pelagics, but what dominated the boys' excited chatter on the way back to Chennai was a land-lubber of

a bird – a Plaintive cuckoo, which had no business poking around Odaiyur lake, in fact, in any part of South India. In India, this bird is meant to be seen in its north-eastern parts, until a "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull" among them shows up in an unexpected patch.

It was a joint sighting with both boys documenting the female Plaintive cuckoo with their cameras. The bird was first seen through the window of a moving car. It was perched on a shrub by the Odaiyur lake. With the car stopped and parked, the duo started clicking away, capturing it even as it shifted perches in the shrubs.

The feathers were unlike anything else they had seen before; and they did not have a name for it. Amoggh says it was IDed as Plaintive cuckoo through a couple of online birding groups. "The experts consulted are Sunil Kumar Unni from Chennai; Adesh Shivkar from Mumbai; and Ashwin V. from Bengaluru," Amoggh notes. The record is up on eBird.

Umesh Mani, a seasoned birder and a member of Madras Naturalists Society, on

the rarity of Plaintive cuckoo in these parts: "Plaintive cuckoo is a bird of the North-east, and rarely seen down South – the books show only occasional records. I have seen it just once earlier in Chennai, some 10-12 years back. It is definitely rare here, although I think that could partly be due to the fact that it may be easily confused with the hepatic morph of the Grey-bellied cuckoo (which is quite often seen here), especially if the underparts are not seen clearly." There was a time when the Grey-bellied cuckoo was considered a Plaintive cuckoo's "cousin", being viewed as a subspecies. It is a long time since the Grey-bellied cuckoo was jettisoned from the Plaintive cuckoo family, and accorded separate family status.

In their identification notes, the experts pointedly discussed features differentiating this female Plaintive cuckoo from a female Grey-bellied cuckoo.

Ashwin observed: "The main thing is the barred tail. And generally stronger barring throughout, including on the throat and breast. Also more rufous on the throat and breast than Grey-bellied."

Amoggh shares the observations made by Sunil and Adesh: "The tail has dark barrings and underparts less white, that points to a female (rufous) Plaintive Cuckoo. Grey-bellied has a cleaner tail and more white underparts. Also, grey bellied does not have the rufous wash on throat (above breast), whereas this bird does."

SPECTRUM

'Refrain from lighting camphor in trains'

With the annual Sabarimala pilgrimage season seeing an increase in passenger traffic, the Chennai Division of the Southern Railway has requested Ayyappa devotees avoid lighting camphor on trains or at railway station premises.

Lighting camphor inside coaches poses a serious fire hazard, as even a small flame can ignite baggage or fittings, creating dangerous situations in the confined environment of a train,

a release from the railways stated.

Violations may result in penalties under the relevant provisions of the Railway Act, the release said.

The Railway Protection Force

teams are maintaining enhanced vigilance inside trains to prevent unsafe practices. Escort teams have been deployed in select services to ensure compliance with safety regulations and assist passengers.

Monsoon helpline

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

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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 delicate brain surgery



Doctors and nurses with the young man on whom the brain surgery was performed.

PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The neurosurgical team at Dr. Kamakshi Memorial Hospitals recently carried out a complex emergency brain surgery on a young man.

The man arrived at the hospital with a screwdriver embedded deep inside his skull, which injury experts describe as "extremely rare and often fatal without immediate intervention." A CT scan showed that the screwdriver had punctured a vital motor control area responsible for moving the left side of his body. It was also dangerously close to major blood vessels that, if damaged, could have caused severe bleeding, a release said. This was a race against time. Even a slight delay could have caused permanent para-

lysis or devastating vascular damage, said Dr. Rahul Srinivasan, a neurosurgeon who performed the surgery. The patient was immediately transferred to the hospital's advanced neurosurgical operating room. Dr. Srinivasan carefully removed the screwdriver and nearby bone fragments without harming vital structures. After surgery, the patient was kept on ventilator support for two days to manage brain swelling and stabilise vital functions. Initially, the patient experienced weakness on the left side of the face, arm and leg. Intensive physiotherapy and neuro-rehabilitation helped him steadily regain strength, the release adds.

Luxury boutique hotel ready for festive season



The Palomar by Crossway, a luxury boutique hotel at Akkarai - Sholinganallur on East Coast Road, is designed for every kind of traveller.

Combined with stay, diverse dining, and a collection of spaces, the hotel offers rooms in superior, deluxe and twin categories.

Guests can enjoy a variety of amenities, including a swimming pool, fitness centre, atrium, rooftop and well-equipped meeting and conference facilities, said a release.

Cappella, its international cuisine restaurant, offers flavours from around the world.

The 'Spotted Deer' is famous for its mus-

ical evenings, offering a space for both new and familiar artists.

For events, Zol Garden provides an intimate venue that easily accommodates weddings, receptions, baby showers and pop-up markets.

This festive season, The Palomar Cappella will host Christmas eve dinner and brunch, and New Year's eve dinner, and brunch. The hotel will ring in 2026 at Spotted Deer with a night of live music and Palomar's exclusive stay packages combine a dinner with a luxurious room experience, added the release.

For reservations and enquiries, call 89258 48868.

Agni college signs pact for an AI center

Agni College of Technology in Thalambur has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MiPhi Semiconductors Private Limited to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence and Semiconductor Technologies on its campus.

The collaboration includes the development of a 30-seat MiPhi Operations Center and a cutting-edge AI Laboratory, providing students and faculty with opportunities for advanced research, long-term internships, placements, and exposure to industry-focused projects, said a release.

Prasad Balakrishnan, chief executive officer of MiPhi Semiconductor Private Limited, stated that this partnership provides a strong talent pipeline and supports the development of highly skilled engineers trained in real-world AI and semiconductor applications, which are critical to India's growing technological ecosystem.

"The CoE will strive to attract students, research collaborators, and the community by enhancing our dedication to forward-looking engineering education and emerging technology sectors."

The initiative aims to enhance students' technical competencies, strengthen faculty development, and open new avenues for collaborative research and innovation, the release added.



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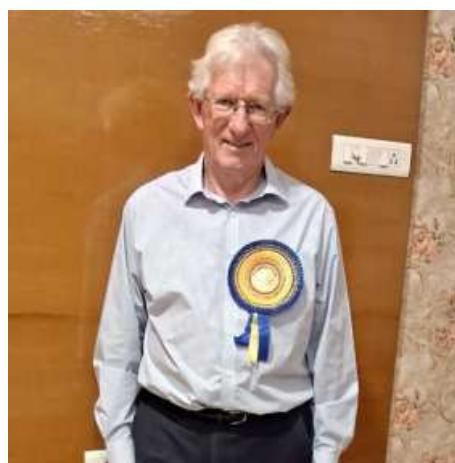
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'Jolly Phonics makes learning English fun and effective'

Chris Jolly visits Velammal School



Chris Jolly, the visionary founder and publisher of Jolly Learning and creator of the globally acclaimed Jolly Phonics programme, visited Velammal School as part of his India Teacher Training Tour 2025 – a nine-city initiative aimed at transforming English language education across the country.

At the Chennai session, Chris Jolly addressed educators on the challenges of English teaching and the power of phonics-based learning in overcoming them. The session also featured practical training led by certified Indian Jolly Phonics trainers, who demonstrated how the programme helps teachers achieve faster and stronger literacy outcomes compared to traditional teaching methods, said a release.

"Jolly Phonics is designed to make learning English engaging, fun, and effective," said Chris Jolly. "We want teachers in India to see how this approach can accelerate literacy, boost confidence, and make learning enjoyable for every child."

'Santa' walkathon in Nolambur

Sportena Academy has partnered with Decathlon to organise a santa walkathon on December 14 at Decathlon in Nolambur. All school students from PRE-KG to Class VIII are invited to join.

All participants will get the santa cap, finisher certificate, medal, balloon with stick and refreshment, said a release.

For details: 8610443961 / 8778394729 / 9380869045

Christmas carols at CSI Redeemer Church on December 14

Once again it is Christmas season, and all over the city the sound of Carols ring. One among the many programmes is the much-awaited carols at the CSI Redeemer Church in Anna Nagar, which is an elaborate event of Carols both classical and contemporary.

The event is titled 'Star of God' in the background of a very meaningful poem written by Fred Weatherly and composed by Eric Coates. The Junior choir of the church will also present a few carols. The choir has been performing for the last 30 years and is one of the well trained church choirs in the city. The Christmas concert is their signature event that has attracted music lovers of all denominations and religions.

The choir will be conducted by Emmanuel Ponraj with Hannah Jane on the Piano and the Genesis Chamber Orchestra.

When: December 14; 6 p.m.

Contact: 9841447240/ 9841021256



Christmas Sunday Market

Jupiter Events will host a 'Christmas Sunday Market' on December 21 at Abirami Chidambaram Community Hall in Kotturpuram, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The exhibition will support local businesses. More than a market, the event will be a chance to connect, enjoy, and expand, a press release said.

The market will showcase fashion, lifestyle, apparel, jewellery, accessories, home décor, organic and eco-friendly products, home linens, wedding essentials, snacks and mocktails.

The entry is free. For details, call 98411 88334.

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Workshop on mushroom cultivation



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a workshop on mushroom cultivation on December 11. Another workshop on making camphor and incense sticks will be held on December 12.

The sessions will be held at Agro Tech Green Park, First Floor, Thiru. Vi. Ka. Industrial Estate, Guindy. Prior registration is required. For details, call 044 - 29530048

ஃப்ரெட் மெல்லர்ஸ்.

**இப்பொழுது
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