

TAMBARAM

Chromepet » Pallavaram » Tambaram West » Rajakilpakkam » Mannivakkam » Guindy » Keelkattalai » Nanganallur » Guduvanchery » Hasthinapuram » Pammal » Tambaram East

Medavakkam » Srinivasa Nagar » Kathipara Junction » Kovilambakkam » Sadasivam Nagar » Potheri » Selaiyur » Sembakkam » St.Thomas Mount » Madipakkam » Urappakkam » Paranur



A VISION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Meet Miranda Tomkinson, a deafblind lecturer with multiple postgraduate degrees, who recently received the CavinKare Ability Award **P6**



THE READING ROOM

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 **P4&5**

When will Vandalur Joint Road get a footbridge?

Residents have been seeking this facility for a long time

T.S. ATUL SWAMINATHAN

Passengers forced to walk on railway tracks due to lack of foot overbridge is one reason for accidents. This is evident at Vandalur Joint Road, which is less than a kilometre away from the railway station. Recently, a young woman who was about to cross the track was pulled back in the nick of time and a major accident was averted.

A footbridge is needed to connect the Bypass Road Lane and Vandalur Joint Road (across the railway tracks) near Vandalur railway station.

For years, residents have been demanding a footbridge. They say there is good space along the Lane and the



Pedestrians crossing the tracks near Vandalur railway station. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Joint Road to construct one. Many cyclists and pedestrians cross the tracks to go to GST Road, Mannika Jalagandar Street and Kalaignar Street in Vandalur region. P. Vijayasarathy, a civic activist and a long-time Irumbuliyur resident, says: "Like Irumbuliyur too, a footbridge is needed here."

Other concerns

At Deivasigamani Nagar, diagonally opposite an educational institution, the gaps between the stone railings must be barricaded. Residents of the area cross the tracks to go to GST Road through a lane along a bottled water company.

Apart from this, the barricades along Railway Station Road towards Vandalur railway station should be extended. Pedestrians cross the tracks below and near the overpass connecting GST Road and Outer Ring Road, putting themselves at risk.

The long road to work



This is a snapshot of the everyday battle those taking GST Road in Perungalathur wage during rush hour. A raft of vehicles from other districts converge on this section of GST Road. The image was taken on February 24. PHOTO: VELANKANNI RAJ B.

Human chain today to include Thiruneermalai Eri restoration project in the budget



Thiruneermalai Eri. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

Thiruneermalai Eri Padhkaapu Kuzhu volunteers will conduct a human chain awareness march on March 2 to draw the State Government's attention towards the need to allocate funds in the coming budget to restore the sprawling lake.

The event will be held at 4 p.m. along Thiruneermalai Road, Periya Eri Vembarasu Pillayar Koil. Spread over 150 acres, the

lake has shrunk in size and become shallow, and is used by public to dump all kinds of waste on the bunds. B. Saravanan, one of the coordinators, Thiruneermalai Eri Padhkaapu Kuzhu, says, "We sent many request letters to the State government and the authorities concerned to restore the lake to its original glory."

For details, call B. Saravanan at 98417 83744.



Chitlapakkam Rising conducts 'road damages' audit

DAYANAND KRISHNAN

Chitlapakkam has around 12,500 houses and a majority of the residents use motorcycles and bicycles to access the important transportation hubs, schools and government offices nearby.

For many months, the main roads in Chitlapakkam have experienced road cuts for underground utility installations and when after the work has been completed, these patches are denied BT patchwork. Besides, many potholes have developed putting the lives of residents travelling by two-wheelers at high risk.

Even after complaining to Tambaram Corporation, there was no patchwork, and this prompted the Chitlapakkam Rising Team to conduct a road damages audit and present the findings to the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu in a letter. Copies of the letter have been sent to Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department and Commissioner, Tambaram Corporation.

The audit

The team conducted the road damage audit on February 1, 2025 at the major roads in Chitlapakkam. The roads that were the subject of the audit include: Chitlapakkam Main Road (from Mahalaxmi Nagar to Muthalamman Pond); Babu Street; Chitlapakkam Third Main Road; Thirumurugan Salai; Pamban Swami Salai; Anna Street; Gandhi Street; Nehru Street; and Ragavendra Road.



Two roads that figured in the audit; and one road that received patchwork.



The team found continuous road cuts, potholes and huge craters on these roads left unattended for months creating an unsafe situation for motorcyclists and cycle users.

In the audit, we found 22 potholes, 10 road cuts and 7 big craters.

As the findings of CRT Audit Report, February 2025 have been submitted to the Commissioner of Tambaram Corporation.

Following this, some patchworks were carried out. There is more waiting to be done. On Chitlapakkam Third Main Road, only a big crater received patchwork. This patchwork does not match existing level of the road. Patchwork on other road cuts on this road is pending.

(Dayanand Krishnan is a member of Chitlapakkam Rising Team)



Handrails, lights installed at parks in SSM Nagar

P.S. JAYARAMAN

SSM Nagar Flat Owners Association (SSMNFOA) to enhance safety at a couple of parks at OSR within the community, SSM Nagar in Perungalathur took up an initiative. We installed handrails at Mother Theresa Park to provide support and ease of access for senior citizens living within SSM Nagar.

Besides, SSMNFOA has installed four lampposts at the open space reservation (OSR) park – named Pillay Park.

In addition, our Association has collaborated with Be Well Hospital, Selaiyur, to station an ambulance in our Nagar 24/7, ensuring prompt response to any medical emergencies.

(P.S. Jayaraman is a resident of SSM Nagar in New Perungalathur)



One of the parks

READERS WRITE

'Madambakkam has not seen much development'

Although it has been three years since the Madambakkam Town Panchayat merged with the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation, we have not seen much developmental work.

The road widening work from Rajakilpakkam to Madambakkam is the only one we can highlight.

The open stormwater drain network, constructed more than a decade ago, is clogged without any maintenance work. Sewage is discharged into it, contaminating the groundwater.

Other issues that need attention include the stray cattle and dog menace from Bharath University to Madambakkam and Rajakilpakkam, and the lack of illumination facility at the Padmavathy Nagar extension.

R. Manoharan
Madambakkam

A stormwater drain network at Bhuvaneshwari Nagar in Madambakkam High Road. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



'Mend this patch'

This (see picture) is the state of Bhel Nagar Second Main Road in Medavakkam, stretching from Dheepam Ayurveda Panchakarma Centre till a fruits and vegetables shop.

A portion of the stretch was cemented around the clinic, leaving the rest in a very bad state.

During rains, motorists cannot ascertain the potholes, and they may sustain a fall. I request the Medavakkam Village Panchayat to re-lay the stretch as soon as possible.

Chittal
Medavakkam



'Speed up work on Radha Nagar subway'

The Federation of Civic and Welfare Associations of Zones 2 and 3 (Pallavaram and Sembakkam) of Tambaram City Municipal Corporation have requested the State Highway Department to expedite the completion of the Radha Nagar subway. Members recently staged a protest near the underpass on GST Road in Chromepet.

C. Murugaiyan, the federation secretary, says, "The subway opening will reduce congestion on Rajendra Prasad Road and facilitate connectivity to reach GST Road. The Southern Railway should construct staircases connecting the subway and the suburban train platforms, on the lines of the one at Meenambakkam and Saint Thomas Mount regions."

'Remove encroachments to prevent accidents on RP Road'



A section of Chromepet Station Road. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'A long-pending demand'

Recently, the State government opened two sub-registrar offices in Salem and Krishnagiri districts. While I welcome the move, I request that the State government construct a building for the sub-registrar office, Chromepet region.

On New Colony Second Main Road in Chromepet an office has been functioning from a rented house for long. However, the office lacks enough space for the staff and public, proper ventilation and a wash room.

The newly-married couples must stand for hours to get their marriage registered. The office gets a good revenue, but the amenities provided are poor.

According to Pallavaram MLA E. Karunanidhi, land has been identified near the Pallavaram taluk office, Pallavaram – Thorai-pakkam 200-Feet Radial Road, to construct the office. The State government should do what is needed as soon as possible.

V. Santhanam
Chromepet

'Halt buses at Raj Bhavan stopover'

Earlier, MTC's whiteboard route number buses – 5 B, 5E, 19, 21G, 23C, and 49 – used to halt at the Raj Bhavan stop on Sardar Patel Road, Guindy.

Not for some months now. Commuters proceeding towards Porur and Tambaram regions can board the buses from the Chellammal Women's College

stop, but not for those heading towards Ashok Nagar, K. K. Nagar and Ayanavaram. Commuters must go to Little Mount to board the buses.

The MTC should take action as soon as possible to alleviate the commuters woes.

G. Lalitha Ganesh
Thiruvanmiyur

'Stop setting garbage on fire'



The conservancy staff of Ponmar Gram Panchayat set trash on fire near Jones Dawn Villas at Ponmar. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The conservancy staff of Sithalapakkam and Ponmar panchayats have been setting trash on fire in the Sithalapakkam area near the region's water body and along the trash bin, near Jones Dawn Villas at Ponmar respectively. This is caus-

ing tremendous health problems for the local populace. I request the authorities in the St Thomas Mount Panchayat Union to address this concern as soon as possible.

B. Jacinth
Sithalapakkam

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 postal address and contact number

I have submitted many letters seeking removal of encroachments and widening of Rajendra Prasad (RP) Road, Radha Nagar Main Road, and Station Road in Chromepet. Regarding RP Road, the State Highways Department has promised to remove the encroachments. But, no action has been taken till date, even after the death of a school girl. Regarding the Chromepet Station Road, the Madras Institute of Technology administration gave its area to lay a road on request by the former Pallavapuram Municipality. The municipality has constructed many commercial buildings that have been rented. The road is a vital stretch as it connects the railway station. Due to space constraints, public face many difficulties while travelling. I request the Tambaram City Municipal Corporation to do the needful at the earliest to de-congest the road.

C. Murugaiyan
secretary, Federation of Civic and Welfare Associations of Zone 2 and 3, Pallavaram and Sembakkam

The reading room

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 futile; 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 Sholinganallur 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 TCPS, 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.

AI GENERATED IMAGE: MARIVARASU



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.

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

- 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 Sholinganallur, was fully built, with one room thoughtfully kept aside for this purpose. The library's founding members scoured local markets for books, cherrypicking 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 called, is viewed as a benchmark for community-serving reading facilities.

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 fueling 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-fit, 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-



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 Dhanya 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

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 (NIEPM), 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

A vision for a better future

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. NIEPM 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

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 Rexy Vinotha, 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," Rexy 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 NIEPM 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 NIEPM, 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.



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



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

One hundred years old and still going strong



On February 22, Arignar Anna Municipal Boys Higher Secondary School in Chengalpattu celebrated its 100th anniversary, a milestone that reflects its commitment to excellence in education and holistic development.

One of the key highlights of the event was a prize distribution ceremony where students who have excelled in academics and sports were honoured. Mementos were presented to teachers who have dedicated their efforts to nurturing young minds and contributing to the school's success. A host of dignitaries attended the event including Minister T. M. Anbarasan; MLA Varalakshmi Madhusudhanan; Karpagam, CEO; and Arun Raj; District Collector, Chengalpattu.

Hindustan Institute wins basketball tournament

Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science (HITS) won the Dr. KCG Verghese Memorial Inter-Institutional Basketball Tournament in the men's category.

The 34th edition of the three-day tournament was held recently at Michael Jordan's basketball court at the institution.

The tournament saw exceptional talent from 18 university teams across Chennai, said a release.

Jeppiaar University secured the runners-up position, PES University (Karnataka) took third place, and Pondicherry University won fourth place, added the release.



In the women's category, Vels University emerged victorious, followed by the University of Madras, with HITS securing third place and SSN Chennai in fourth position.

The winners in both categories received cash prizes.

Prachi Tehlan, an actress and a

former international basketball and netball captain, was the chief guest at the valedictory ceremony.

Jayasankar Menon, former captain of the Indian Basketball team, and Balakrishnan, secretary of the Indian Basketball Players Association, graced the occasion.



Business tycoon honoured

In recognition of excellent contributions to business, education, and philanthropy, the B. S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, honoured Abdulla bin Ahmad Al Ghurair, founder of Mashreqbank, re-

cently. The institution conferred the billionaire businessman with the degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa). His business empire extends beyond banking, encompassing construction and infrastructure. His companies have played a vital role in landmark projects, such as the Dubai metro and the exterior cladding of Burj Khalifa.

Vidhya Sagar College celebrates 20th annual day



The Vidhya Sagar Women's College in Chengalpattu recently celebrated its 20th annual day. Prasanna Vasanadu, founder and chief executive officer of Tikitoro, was the chief guest.

In her address, Prasanna emphasised the importance of self-love. She also highlighted the significance of education in empowering women and encouraged

students to harness their knowledge to develop their skills and talents.

The occasion also witnessed the release of the college's annual e-magazine, 'Vidhya Vardhini,' and the felicitation of 17 students for academic excellence.

A vibrant cultural programme showcasing the talents of students.

Sports event held

Rotary Club of Madras T. Nagar organised its sports meet called Swastik Shree Rotary Olympiad 2025 recently. The event witnessed 200 participants.

As part of the event, chess and carrom were conducted. Table tennis veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal inaugurated the event.

Best Bargains



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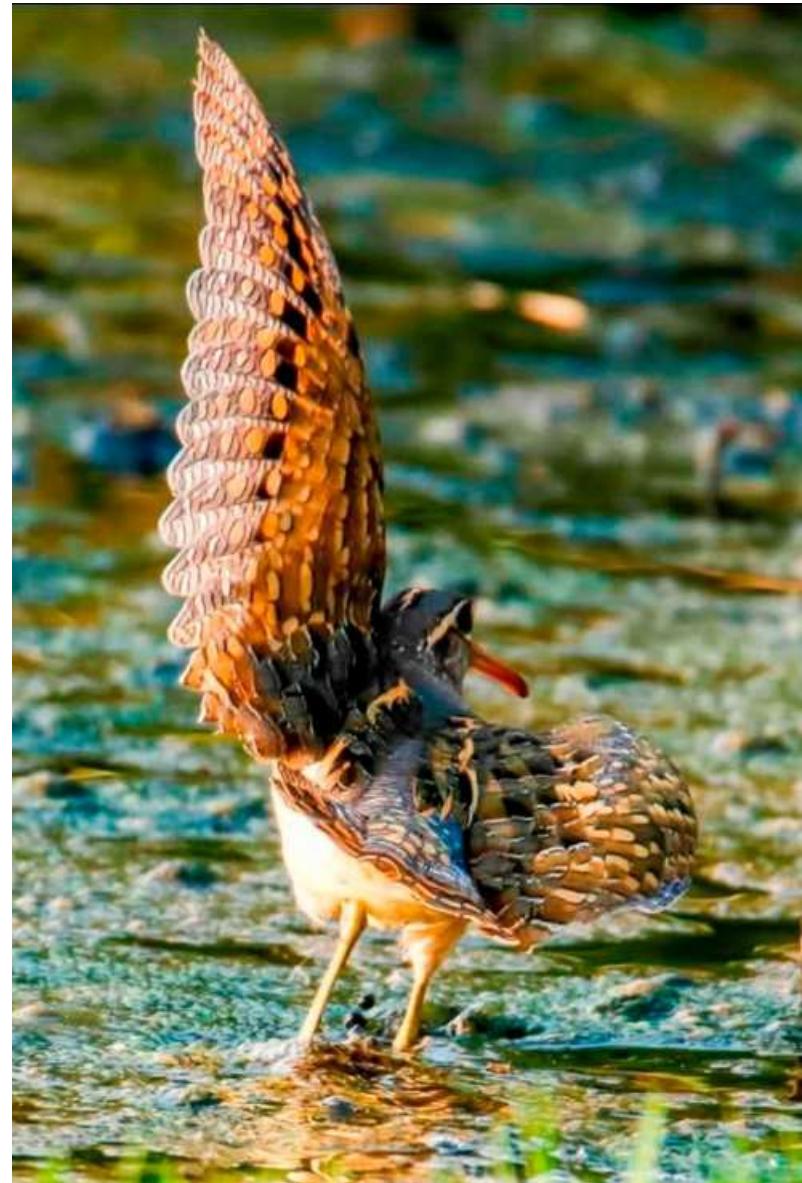
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A picture of belligerence



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.



MTC releases details of buses at Kilambakkam

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation has released a list of buses at the Kilambakkam MTC bus terminus or Kalaignar Centenary Bus Terminus.

The list has route numbers, destinations, platforms and timings.

The route numbers are 91K (Thiruvanmiyur, platform number: 8, first bus - 1 a.m., last service 23.10 p.m., and frequency: 15 minutes), 91R (Velachery, 8, 04.50 a.m., 19.05 p.m., 25 minutes), 95X (Thiruvanmiyur, 8, 04.40 a.m., 21.37 p.m., 15 minutes), 95X, a cut service (Sholinganallur, 8, 05.15 a.m., 20.45 p.m., 20 minutes), 99X (Adyar Gandhi Nagar, 8, 3 a.m., 23.40 p.m., 20 minutes), 51X (Velachery, 8, 03.10 a.m., 21.22 p.m., 20 minutes), 51AX (Theyagaraya Nagar, 9, 03.50 a.m., 20.40 p.m., 20 minutes), 66K (Kundrathur, 10, 05.40 a.m., 19.40 p.m., 30 minutes), 66P (Poonamallee, 10, 00.25 a.m., 23.55 p.m., 20 minutes), 583K (Sriperumbudur, 12, 03.50 a.m., 19.40 p.m., 40 minutes), B18X (Korukkupet, 5, 4.30 a.m., 18.55 p.m., 40 minutes), 104A (Avadi, 5, 5.50 a.m., 21.10 p.m., 40 minutes), 104C (Koyambedu, 5, 1 a.m., 22.20 p.m., 5 minutes), 104F (Madhavaram, 5, 05.15 a.m., 20.25 p.m., 50 minutes), 104G (Mahakavi Bharathi Nagar, 5, 04.50 a.m., 20 p.m., 50 minutes), 104H (Kavignar Kannadasan Nagar, 5, 04.30 a.m., 21.05 p.m., 50 minutes), 104M (MMBT, 5, 04.30 a.m., 20 p.m., 55 minutes), 104T

The display board at Kilambakkam bus terminus. Photo: Special Arrangement.

(Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, 5, 04.40 a.m., 21.10 p.m., 50 minutes), 18A, a cut service (Guindy, 6, 4 a.m., 21.40 p.m., 10 minutes), 21G (Broadway, 7, 00.20 a.m., 21.42 p.m., 15 minutes), 55V (Tambaram 11, 05.30 a.m., 22.25 p.m., 20 minutes), and 111 (Thiruverkadu, platform number: 7), 12IH (Kavignar Kannadasan Nagar, 7), 206 (Avadi, 11).

297 (Thiruvallur, 11), 515M (Mamallapuram, 11), 515K (Kovalam, 11), 555S (Sholinganallur, 11), 500 (Chengalpattu, 4), 18AX (Broadway, 6), 21G, a cut service (Mandaiveli, 7), 70C (K. K. Nagar, 7), 70E (Mullai Nagar, 7), 70F (Madhavaram, 7), 70K (Avadi, 7), 70M (MMBT, 7), and 70T (Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, 7).

Culinary workshop on March 6

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information & Training Centre is conducting a culinary workshop on March 6. According to a press release, the session focuses on preparation of flavour powders using spices which includes: sambar powder, rasam powder, idli podi, and those meant for non-vegetarian cuisines. Another workshop on mushroom cultivation will be held on March 7. Both the sessions will be held at the centre's premises at Agro Tech Green Park, Guindy. PH: 044 - 29530048