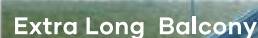
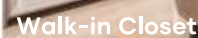
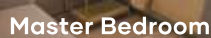


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Members of the Federation of OMR Residents Associations presenting the manifesto to representatives of political parties. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

OMR's 2026 manifesto released

Prepared by FOMRRA, the document presents various issues plaguing residents of the IT Corridor

The Federation of OMR Residents Associations (FOMRRA) has drawn up “OMR’s 2026 Manifesto” highlighting hugely vexatious issues plaguing residents as well as their pet peeves. A relatively younger locality riding piggy-back on IT growth, OMR has been a laggard in terms of civic infrastructure across its surface area. While it has been treated to the downsides of development, namely crowding, pollution and traffic logjams among others, it finds the benefits emerging from a developed region largely elusive. Through this manifesto, FOMRRA, which reportedly commands the following of 250 communities, a good number of them humongous vertical villages, 50,000 homes and three lakh voters, seeks to draw the attention of political parties to these issues ahead of the TN assembly elections. Here are some of the features of the manifesto.

Smart city and digital infra

OMR is home to techies from various parts of the country; and big names in delivery of digital services have their address along its corridor. In this climate, one is justified in expecting civic redressal systems that are a notch, if not several notches, ahead of those in other parts of the Chennai Metropolitan Area in terms of its delivery through digital channels. FOMRRA manifesto notes that “premier IT corridor – a tech hub – lacks basic smart governance, frustrating residents expecting seamless digital services.” Its wish list reads: “Deploy flood prediction and early warning systems on open, accessible platforms; create an OMR-specific unified grievance platform integrating GCC, Highways, Police,



Metrowater, and CMRL for single-point resolution; provide open, API-based dashboards tracking works progress, timelines, and Service Level Agreements; make esca-

lation matrices public to ensure transparent accountability.”

Flood mitigation

In vast swaths of OMR, the bogey of

flooding hovers like an ominously dark cloud every NE Monsoon.

FOMRRA underlines “missing or undersized stormwater drains” as a cause; and seeks “retaining walls along Buckingham Canal”. It has also called out “lake restorations not connected to stormwater drains”.

The required action, as stated by FOMRRA, includes building “an integrated SWD network across main roads, service roads, and interior layouts, linked to all canals and waterbodies; scientific mapping and restore the natural flow paths for canals and waterbodies; halting approvals for development on designated waterbody lands.”

UGD and water supply

The manifesto points out poor de-

livery of sewage clearance systems, which actually is often an euphemism for sewage taking a forbidden route, travelling down SWD conduits and showing up on roads, in fact, the Road of all roads, OMR itself.

At the time of this edition going to print, residents of communities close to a stretch of Navallur Toll Gate are dealing with overflowing sewage on OMR and a link road branching off OMR.

OMR’s 2026 Manifesto points out that “OMR faces chronic shortages in sewerage treatment capacity, with current STPs falling well below the projected 360 MLD demand, alongside limited piped water, heavy reliance on tankers, and poor waste clearance. These gaps drive illegal sewage dumping into canals and marshlands, increase health risks and flooding, degrade living standards in a high-tax IT corridor, and create unsafe commuting due to excessive tanker traffic near schools.”

The action FOMRRA seeks, reads: “deploy a universal underground drainage (UGD) network to stop open discharges into canals, marshlands, and other waterways; commission four new 100 MLD STPs with continuous online emission/effluent monitoring stations and public-access dashboards; ensure 24x7 piped potable water to every OMR locality.

Public transport

Not long ago, FOMRRA mapped gaps in bus connectivity across OMR through a detailed study. The manifesto notes that “OMR grapples with Metro Phase-2 delays, weak bus frequencies, missing last-mile connectivity, and no mini-bus and feeder services to bridge critical gaps. These gaps drive excessive private vehicle use, worsening congestion, pollution, and transport inefficiency across the IT corridor.”

Its wish list in this matter reads: “fast-track Metro Phase-2 along OMR with clear milestones and regular progress updates; integrate bus-metro-suburban networks serving IT parks and residential clusters seamlessly; increase peak-hour and late-evening MTC bus frequencies to match demand; formalise last-mile solutions through feeder buses and e-rickshaws at all metro and bus hubs.

FOMRRA notes, that this document was made possible by the efforts of numerous volunteers. The manifesto can be accessed in its entirety at <https://manifesto.fomrra.org>

IT CORRIDOR

Adyar » Kanathur » Kelambakkam » Navalur » Semmencherry » Thoraipakkam » Velachery » IIT Madras » Kandanchavadi » Kottivakkam

Neelankarai » Sholinganallur » Thiruvannamiyur » Vijaya Nagar » Indira Nagar » Karapakkam » Kotturpuram » Padur » Thalambur » Pallikaralai

Additional ticket counter at Thiruvannamiyur MRTS station sought

Commuters accessing the station via the skywalk now have to climb down two floors to buy their tickets



Commuters cannot access the staircases to the ticket counter. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

N. GAYATHRI

Southern Railway should definitely offer an additional ticket counter at the station.

An additional booking office would just be what the doctor ordered, particularly for commuters from Taramani who currently use the skywalk to reach the terminal. As things stand, these

commuters (after reaching the platform towards Chennai Beach using the footbridge) have to climb down two floors to buy their tickets.

The other option is to walk on the pavement along Ramanujam Intellion Park, Rajiv Gandhi Salai. Near the Taj Hotel, the pedestrian space is narrow, and two pedestrians cannot walk side by side, so one pedestrian has to let

the other through.

They have to climb the footbridge (along the Tidel Park junction), access the platform, again climb down more than two floors near the Government Railway Protection Force (GRPF) Station, and reach the ticket counter.

Even below, near the GRPF station, a ticket counter can be facilitated. Commuters can also purchase tickets here and access the platform.

It will be useful to commuters from the eastern lane of Rajiv Gandhi Salai.

Even on the ground floor, a ticket counter can be provided, which will be useful for commuters heading to Velachery, as at the railway station platforms, the crowd is scattered.

There is a large area within the station building that connects to the skywalk. The space is underutilised and will help those without passes.

Below the skywalk, pedestrians cannot walk on the stretch to reach the counter, and have to walk amidst the traffic, as the area outside the railway station has been barricaded for the Chennai Metro Rail work.

N. Gayathri works at Ramanujam Intellion Park in Taramani

February 2026							March 2026						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31				

DOWNLOAD YOUR DRY WASTE CALENDAR

Thooimai Mission seeks to make segregation a daily routine for residents by introducing a calendar that earmarks every Saturday for collection of a particular category of recyclable waste **P2**

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Download your dry waste calendar

Thooimai Mission seeks to make segregation a daily routine for residents by introducing a calendar that earmarks every Saturday for collection of a particular category of recyclable waste



SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

What would pop up first in a head that tries to wrap itself around the notion of “habit formation”? That is a no-brainer; obviously “daily routine”. Would “calendar” show up next, and would the two be tied together in a blood bond? In its head, Thooimai Mission (launched by Tamil Nadu Government in March 2025 and kitted out with the Clean Tamilnadu Company Limited as its executive arm) went through this sequence in a case of serious vertical thinking while trying to make sense of the poor response to its early dry waste collection drives. These early drives had seen limited response, not because people were unaware of them, but because careless dumping had long become a habit. The bad habit needed to be replaced with a good one, which should be reinforced by a special calendar.

The Mission has designed a year-long, material-specific waste collection calendar aimed at making segregation more of a routine than a one-off activity (in response to a collection drive). “People are not used to this kind of habit,” explains Hariharan B., C Cube Manager at Thooimai Mission CTCL. “So instead of making it a one-time collection, we decided to make it continuous.”

Based on household waste patterns, the calendar schedules weekly and date-specific collection drives for different waste streams



Snapshots of special collection drives; the calendar.

such as plastics, paper, glass, e waste, textiles, thermocol, footwear, and expired medicines. “People’s questions are always material specific,” says Hariharan. “What do I do with plastic? What do I do with old slippers? Going material specific helps people develop the habit of depositing instead of dumping.” Going by where the shades have landed on the calendar, different forms of dry waste, one might assume the routine in question is weekly by nature, but it is not. Segregation is a daily routine and every Saturday is earmarked for the collection of particular category of

dry waste. “Every Saturday, people are reminded that they need to deposit their waste,” Hariharan says. The system is supported by the Circular Collective, a network of NGOs, RWAs, government officials, self-help groups, and conservancy staff driving decentralised collection at the ward level. The calendar also functions alongside a growing network of permanent collection centres. While ward level drop off points remain primary, zonal centres act as secondary hubs. Bringing these centres closer to neighbourhoods lowers effort and makes regular depositing more practical.

across the city through BOV announcements and social media reminders.

Residents who organise dry waste collection drives regularly in their corner of the planet welcome this calendar, but are worried about one factor that might override its effectiveness.

Sherin Joseph of Zero Waste Initiatives, who coordinates ward-level collection efforts, names this factor as “wilful indifference”.

“Many people understand the problem,” she says, “but they insist segregation is the job of conservancy staff or argue that they pay taxes for it. That logic obviously misses the point. Taxes are for infrastructure. Waste is generated in our homes, and segregation has to be handled by the person who creates it.” Giving a thumbs-up to this initiative by Thooimai Mission, Sherin says, “A well-planned event calendar with collection drives for specific waste categories every Saturday, can truly help rewire our habits.”

Primarily circulated in digital format to avoid paper waste, the calendar (downloadable from @thooimaimission on Instagram) has been shared with local bodies



The prize delivered at Kotturpuram

The Green Team at Clover by the River, a gated community in Kotturpuram, won lane composters as part of the We Segregate Project. The lane composters were delivered at the gated community on February 4, 2026.

According to a press release, the project is being implemented by Residents of Kasturbanagar Association (ROKA) with Okapi as research partners and project lead; and Chennai Resilience Centre as communications partner. The project is funded by The Urban Ocean program consortium.

ROKA along with Nilayaan would be handholding the clover team for a period of six months with periodic interventions and any troubleshooting that might be required.

Says Janani Venkitesh of ROKA: "With this initiative, we wish to see 100% segregation in the Clover community and slowly expanding to the Kotturpuram neighborhood. We encouraged the Swachh Bharath & GCC team Sinonmani and Gayathri to be part of the inauguration, to spread awareness and the need for segregation and *in situ* wet waste management to other BWGs."



Lane composters delivered at Clover By The River in Kotturpuram.



Sports day for tiny tots

Akshar Arbol International School conducts Annual Sports Day for its Early Learning and Early Primary students, at Injambakkam



The 14th Annual Sports Day for Early Learning and Early Primary students at Akshar Arbol International School from both its T. Nagar and Injambakkam campuses reflected fitness, teamwork and endeavour.

The event unfolded at the Injambakkam campus on East Coast Road with the proceedings beginning not on track and field but at a cafeteria.

According to a press release, the parent community gathered at Las Brisas, the cafeteria on the Injambakkam campus, where the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and a cheerful breakfast set the tone. Conversations, smiles and shared excitement created a strong sense of togetherness even before the first whistle blew.

As the event commenced, the field came alive with the disciplined rhythm of student drills: a showcase of coordination, focus and following instructions with precision. The occasion was further enriched by the presence of chief guest Jaisankar N., professor and Head of the Department of Information Technology at MNM Jain Engineering College in Thoraipakkam.

The youngest among learners at Akshar Arbol participated in various events designed to build balance, agility, perseverance and self-belief, the release adds.

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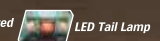
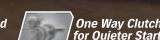
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From cancer screening camps by Pennalam and Thenmozhi Memorial Trust.



Around World Cancer Day (February 4), a look at two mobile cancer screening units based in Chennai that are taking preventive healthcare into the everyday lives of women who might otherwise put it off for “later”

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

Pennalam, a women-focused cancer screening initiative operating under the Sri Dhanvantri Trust, has had its mobile screening buses traversing the city since 2013, offering breast and cervical cancer screening through a decentralised, community-oriented model.

Pennalam traces its origins to 2009, when its founder, Radhika Santhanakrishnan, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her experience during treatment exposed a persistent barrier that extended beyond infrastructure. “I realised that fear and lack of information were preventing women from even considering screening,” she says.

Early efforts centred on a clinic in Mandaveli and a series of awareness programmes. Participation, however, remained limited. The recalibration was decisive. “Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we decided to go to the people,” Radhika explains.

That shift materialised in 2013 with the launch of Pennalam’s first mobile screening bus, developed after months of coordination with Ashok Leyland, which provided the chassis, and with funding support from ONGC. Subsequent expansion was enabled through partnerships with Rotary Clubs, while the Australian Consulate also ex-

Early screening matters; *do not miss the bus*



tended support.

The buses are equipped to conduct mammograms and Pap smear tests, enabling screening for two cancers with high incidence among women. Mammograms are offered to women aged 40 and above, while Pap smears are conducted for women above 22 years who are married or have been in a relationship. The programme deliberately reframes screening as wellness. The slogan printed on the bus reads, “Thozhi, test edu... arogyathai kondaadu.”

Camps are organised in colleges, corporate campuses, RWAs, and social organisations. To organise a camp, the Pennalam team first identifies a local point of contact within the community, who coordinates communication, mobilises participants, and facilitates the awareness session preceding screening. A minimum of 50 women is required for a camp to be scheduled. Each camp follows a three-stage protocol: an awareness session, on-site screening, and a return visit to deliver reports and explain next steps.

Participants submit Aadhaar identification and medical histories prior to screening. Reports are evaluated by trained radiologists and gynaecologists, digitised at a

work of decentralised outreach, Chennai-based Thenmozhi Memorial Trust has been conducting mobile breast cancer screening camps since 2015, targeting women in rural and peri-urban regions where diagnostic access remains limited. The Trust does not operate a dedicated mobile unit; instead, screening buses are hired from external providers including the Shantha Breast Cancer Foundation and VS Medical Trust based on logistical feasibility.

The operational model is narrowly defined. Screening is limited to mammograms, offered primarily to women above 40 years of age, with marriage listed as an eligibility criterion. “Every scan is funded by the Trust. There is no cost to the participant,” says Arun Kumar M., founder of Thenmozhi Memorial Trust.

Each camp is overseen by a doctor, and participation is preceded by the completion of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire records menstrual history, menopause status, and related clinical indicators, which are used to assess whether additional investigation is required. Women between 35 and 40 years are also evaluated when symptoms or medical history warrant further attention. “The questionnaire helps us identify risk and decide the next steps,” Arun Kumar says.

Site selection prioritises rural locations, often facilitated through collaborations with organisations already embedded in local communities. Reaching these sites presents persistent challenges. Mobile mammography equipment requires a 230-volt power supply, which is typically arranged through temporary connections from the village electricity line, coordinated by local leadership. Transport is organised within the village, and public announcements



base station, and conveyed back to participants. After screening camps, women who require further investigation are referred to the nearest Primary Health Centre or a government hospital.

While many camps are conducted with sponsor support, enabling free screening, others operate with a small participation fee to sustain operations.

Pennalam can be contacted at 9843124842

Heading to peri-urban areas
Working within a similar frame-

are used to inform residents ahead of the camp.

Cultural hesitation continues to affect participation. “Cancer screening carries fear and stigma,” Arun Kumar notes. Women are often reluctant due to the nature of the procedure and the presence of unfamiliar volunteers. To address this, the team engages village heads in advance and relies largely on female volunteers to explain the process in detail, including the requirement to remove clothing and the functioning of the equipment.

Camps have been conducted in locations such as Nemalur, Chinna Bommajikulam, Mathur and Karanai. In Chinna Bommajikulam, approximately 80 kilometres from Chennai, the Trust reached a tribal settlement without proper roads or electricity with support from nuns running a geriatric centre. Questionnaire responses in one village revealed that a significant number of women had undergone hysterectomies, underscoring gaps in reproductive health awareness.

Attendance is a determining factor in whether camps are viable. A minimum of 40 participants is required. To improve attendance, the Trust has occasionally tied up with local sponsors. In one instance, women who came for screening received one kilogram of rice and sugar each. Word-of-mouth played a role in increasing participation.

Approximately 2,000 women have been screened to date. Results are delivered to villages within a week, and cases requiring further evaluation are referred to partner hospitals, with the Trust facilitating follow-up. “Our focus is not frequency,” Arun Kumar says. “It is whether the intervention is meaningful.”

While awareness levels are relatively higher in urban areas, the Trust also conducts camps in cities when requests are received from residents’ welfare associations, workplaces, or community groups. These requests are assessed based on feasibility and the expected number of participants.

Thenmozhi Memorial Trust can be contacted at 9994561398.

417 Chennai schools impart cleanliness coaching to students

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 10th edition of Swachh Survekshan, the annual cleanliness and sanitation survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, has a new criterion: assessing cleanliness-related behavioural change programmes in schools.

Greater Chennai Corporation is gearing up for this aspect of the survey with the support of the swachh management committees it has formed in 417 schools under its jurisdiction.

A five-member committee in each school comprising a nodal teacher, supported by two educators and two students will be driv-

ing various initiatives to ring home the message on cleanliness and hygiene. The programme is aimed at bringing behavioural change in students of Classes VI, VII and VIII and will start with an orientation programme for all the nodal teachers from these schools.

A staff working on this initiative points out that a booklet guiding

teachers on how to take classes on solid waste management will be officially launched soon. The nodal teachers will go back and train the teams from their schools including class teachers.

'People Movement for Clean City', another initiative launched three years ago, will also be guiding the swachh management com-

mittees. Every third Wednesday, the last period on the timetable, will focus on cleanliness, waste segregation and the role children can play in keeping the premises around them spic and span. There is also a proposal to pass a GO so that lessons on solid waste management are part of the timetable, adds the staff.



Should Chennai take this lesson from Indore schools?

This city in Madhya Pradesh began sensitising students towards the need to keep their environments clean much before Swachh Bharat Mission introduced this behavioural intervention as a parameter in its Swachh Survekshan survey

LIFY THOMAS

Indore Municipal Corporation's official Facebook page, SwachhIndore, is crowded with display of activities geared towards Swachh Survekshan. With the annual exercise nigh at hand, posts involving school children take centre stage. Street cricket carries the message on cleanliness. Republic Day celebration goes zero waste. RRR (Reduce Reuse Recycle) corner comes up on campuses. Catchy jingles repeat the message that citizens take ownership of city's cleanliness initiatives. All of these together signal a concerted push towards shaping behaviour early.

The 10th edition of Swachh Survekshan has a new indicator that looks at behavioural change programmes in schools, and the way Indore has been preparing its young citizens suggests that the city has already been laying the groundwork for this, may be even before the metrics were formally introduced.

Having won India's cleanest city tag for eight consecutive years, the enthusiasm to maintain this status is evident. Information, Education and Communication teams fan out to various zones



and wards and approach each school for a round of open discussion with the management. The expectations are clearly outlined; and suggestions are also invited from institutions. The team engages in pep talks through activities and games on waste segregation, make students take mass pledge.

Activities often use visual cues such as a snake and ladder game to understand segregation of waste. Even competitions are conducted among wards to foster long-term behavioural changes.

"A plogging activity outside the school, within 50 to 100 metres from the school area, involving children is conducted. We expect school managements to adopt the areas outside their

From the toolkit

- Marks for cleanliness within school premises - 100
- Validation for this indicator will be carried out by visiting the schools (public/ private/ Government/Municipal Schools) within the Urban Local Body's jurisdiction. Photographs and videos will be captured at the sampled locations.
- ULB needs to update list of schools on swachhatam portal and at least 80% government schools to be assessed under this

school campuses and ensure they are kept clean," says Captain Sunpreet Singh, founder of Human Matrix Secure, a waste management service company working with the Indore Municipal Corporation.

He says the School Education Department sends our circular mapping private and government schools in the city and has set up mandates depending on the locality.

"From government schools with big numbers to small private schools, awareness programmes were conducted even in the previous edition. With assessing behavioural change being introduced as a new criterion, I am sure Indore Municipal Corporation will refine this further and make it more interactive," says Captain Sunpreet.

The impact of these campaigns is that schools also take the onus of driving home the message in their own ways. For instance, schools make sustainability a theme during annual day. "Since last year, we started inviting schools to our waste processing sites for them to understand how the city's waste is processed," he says. Indore's consistent performance and engagement has only pushed the bar for citizens. "These campaigns are on not just because of Swachh Survekshan but they gain increased momentum a few months before February and March. For instance, in Government schools infrastructure-related issues such as non-functional lights in toilets are taken up by the municipal corporation. For the IEC team, it is compulsory to conduct at least one school event a month, so by the end of the year we are able to cover most schools in a ward/ zone," says Captain Sunpreet, whose company works with the municipal corporations in Pune, Jaipur, Patna and Nagpur.

A good cleanliness campaign is one that is designed to motivate and nudge citizens towards action, and should tap into emotions such as pride, gratitude, compassion, curiosity and empathy.

Pulkit Khanna, Dean and Professor (Psychology), Jindal Institute of Beha-



Activities at schools in Indore to drive home the message about waste segregation and cleanliness.

PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

vioural Sciences, O.P. Jindal Global University, says involving school students as ambassadors of positive change can go a long way in promoting a sense of greater civic engagement, environmental consciousness as well as collective responsibility among young people.

She says schools play a critical role in socialising children, and behavioural change programmes in the format of embedded-curricular or extra-curricular activities can prove to be very useful. These students could further champion the cause in their own homes and neighbourhoods, thereby bringing about a cascading effect of community sensitisation.

As a behavioural scientist, she recommends consistent implementation of programmes, taking up initiatives involving multiple stakeholders including school teachers and administrators, proper training of programme facilitators such that it is not a 'one size fits all' approach.

As the Swachh Bharat Mission framework puts it: "Knowledge regarding a city's performance could act as a positive nudge for citizens to adopt new behaviours to help their city win laurels nationally and rank higher in the next Survekshan."

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A morning of tennis excellence



mByom Consulting and Management Services LLP, in partnership with the Nawab Garden Residents Association, organised "A Morning of Tennis Excellence," a tournament that turned the Ambadi Road tennis courts into an inclusive space welcoming players of all ages and skill levels.

Ajit Mathai, chairman of mByom, who is stewarding the courts' maintenance, said, "More than just a sporting

venue, the courts are envisioned as a space where community, fitness, and grassroots talent converge."

Indian professional tennis player Srinivasan Vasudevan was the guest of honour.

Having high-quality accessible facilities within a residential community are exactly what we need to develop the next generation of Indian champions, said Srinivasan.

Ranjit Pratap, chairman of Rayala Corporation Private Limited, was the chief guest. In his speech, he emphasised the significance of community-based support for sport.

Beyond tennis, the event featured a variety of family-friendly activities, therapeutic massage sessions, pottery, art projects, special gifts for children, and a delicious breakfast, added the release.

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Express 'N' Talk Academy in Besant Nagar hosts a programme on 'communication skills' every Sunday, covering public speaking, impromptu speaking, and nonverbal communication. The 'Back to School' programme aims to help school students perform better, become more engaged, and enjoy learning new hobbies, reducing inhibitions when asked to perform. The programme runs from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Learning Community at Quest, Besant Nagar. Phone: 8056077776

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